



An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta,
Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta

Department of Arts, Heritage,
Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

Introductory Briefing for Minister

Department of Arts, Heritage,

Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

14 June 2017



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Introductory Briefing **Minister for Arts, Heritage,** **Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs**

General Information

The Department oversees the protection and presentation of Ireland's heritage and cultural assets, promotes long-term sustainable economic and social progress across rural Ireland, and is responsible for the promotion and development of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht. The goals of the Department are to

- promote and protect Ireland's heritage and culture;
- advance the use of the Irish language;
- progress the economic and social development of rural Ireland;
- support the sustainable development of the islands; and
- develop cultural tourism.

While the Department's remit covers a range of diverse areas, there are strong synergies between the work of the different Divisions. The Department has a strong economic remit and adds value to the national economy through its activities in relation to the arts, built heritage, cultural institutions, national parks and reserves and its rural development programmes.

The Department funds a number of State Bodies and Agencies with responsibilities relating to various aspects of the Department's remit and works with these bodies and agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to fulfilling the Department's mandate. Details of these bodies and agencies are attached at Appendix I.

The Department along with the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure and Department for Communities, are co-sponsors of two of the six cross-border implementation bodies established under the terms of the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999.

Staffing

The Department has a staffing complement of 725 as of June 2017 (including 58 seasonal staff) and operates from a number of key locations as follows:

Key Locations	Number of Staff
23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2	70
Ely Place, Dublin 2	78
Custom House, Dublin 1	45
Bishop Street, Dublin 8 (National Archives)	50
Joyce House, Lombard Street, Dublin 2	15
Government Buildings, Killarney	49
Ballina, Co. Mayo	44
Na Forbacha, Co. na Gaillimhe	43
Government Buildings, Newtown Road Wexford	30
Flood Street, Galway	11
Killarney National Park	41
Glenveagh National Park (Donegal)	29
Wicklow Mountain National Park	17
Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga (An Spidéal)	7

The remaining staff are located throughout the country in smaller regional offices and national parks and reserves managed by the Department.

Oireachtas Committees – see appendix III

The **Joint Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs** focuses on balanced regional development, rural issues, the arts, the Gaeltacht and the islands. It considers and reports to the Houses of the Oireachtas on the expenditure and administration of the Department and considers the Department's policy formation and implementation.

The **Select Oireachtas Committee** comprises only the Dáil Members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee. It meets to consider legislation and Estimates relating to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Tá **Comhchoiste na Gaeilge**, na Gaeltachta agus na nOileán dírithe ar úsáid na Gaeilge mar theanga choiteann i ngach gné de shaol na hÉireann a chur chun cinn. Cuireann sé úsáid na Gaeilge chun cinn sa phobal, i gcúrsaí ealaíon, oideachais, spóirt, gnó agus polaitíochta agus sna meáin chumarsáide. Tá an Coiste ag féachaint le rud fóna, feiceálach a dhéanamh de stádas na Gaeilge mar chéad teanga oifigiúil na hÉireann

Legislation currently being drafted / prepared – See Appendix II

PROGRAMME AREAS

The Department is currently structured into five divisions as follows:

ARTS DIVISION

Assistant Secretary, Feargal Ó Coigligh

Director Creative Ireland Programme, John Concannon

Section	Principal Officer
1. Arts, Film and Investment	Mary Nash
2. Cultural Policy & Institutions	Kevin Lonergan
3. Creative Ireland	Kevin Lonergan
4. Cultural Schemes	John Kennedy
5. Culture Ireland, International & Education	Christine Sisk
6. National Archives	John McDonough (Director) ¹

HERITAGE DIVISION

Assistant Secretary, Niall Ó Donnchú

Section	Principal Officer
1. National Monuments	Terry Allen
2. Built Heritage, Architectural Policy & Strategic Infrastructure	Martin Colreavy
3. NPWS Strategy and Regional Operations	Trevor Donnelly
4. NPWS Legislation, Licensing & Property	John Fitzgerald
5. NPWS Peatland Issues & Land Designation	Brian Lucas
6. NPWS Science and Biodiversity	Ciaran O'Keeffe

¹ Statutorily Independent but for HR and Corporate support operated within the Department fold.

REGIONAL AND RURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

Assistant Secretary, William Parnell

Section	Principal Officer
1. LEADER	JP Mulherin
2. Rural Policy & Schemes	Finola Moylette
3. Rural Strategy	Sinead Copeland
4. Rural Broadband & Post Office Network	Stjohn O'Connor

GAELTACHT DIVISION

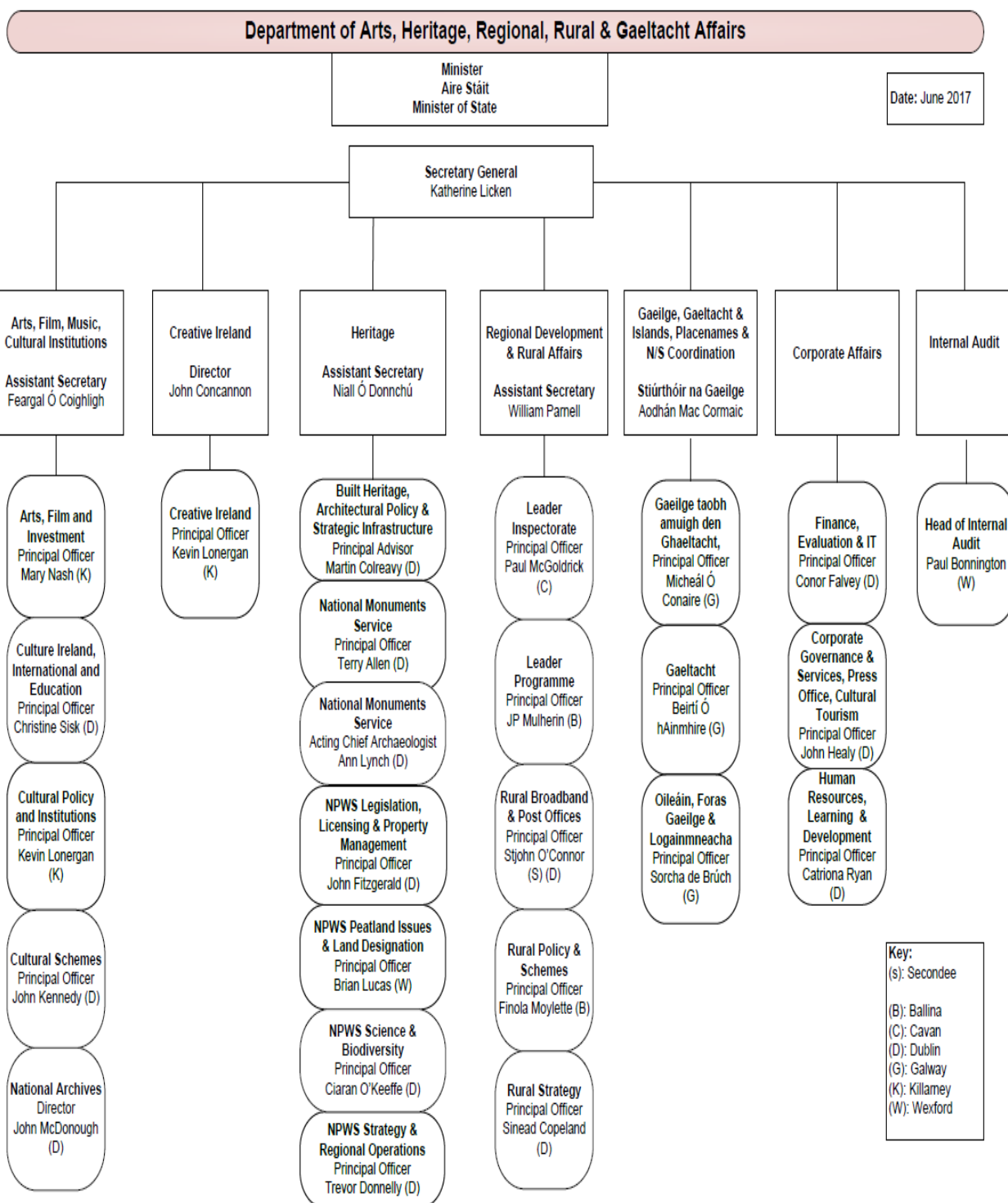
Stiúrthóir na Gaeilge / Director of Irish, Aodhán Mac Cormaic

Section	Principal Officer
1. Irish Language Support Schemes, Official Languages Act, Irish in the EU	Micheál Ó Conaire
2. Gaeltacht Support Schemes, Language Planning, Straitéis, Údarás na Gaeltachta	Bertie Ó hAinmhire
3. Foras na Gaeilge, Placenames & Islands	Sorcha de Brúch
4. An Coimisinéir Teanga	Ronan Ó Domhnaill

CORPORATE AFFAIRS DIVISION

Assistant Secretary, (Vacancy)

Section	Principal Officer
1. Human Resources, Learning & Development	Catriona Ryan
2. Corporate Governance	John Healy
3. Corporate/Office Services	John Healy
4. Finance & Evaluation Unit	Conor Falvey
5. ICT Unit	Conor Falvey



Arts - Key Priorities

Assistant Secretary – Feargal Ó Coigligh

Director of *Creative Ireland Programme* - John Concannon

Overview

The goal of the Department's Arts Division is to support and develop Ireland's arts and culture thereby enriching lives through engagement in cultural activity; and to promote Ireland's arts and culture globally. The Arts Division has 96 staff, 53 of whom are assigned to the National Archives with the remaining 43 working in four Business Units:

Business Unit	Staff	Principal Officer
Arts, Film and Investment	12	Mary Nash
Cultural Policy and Institutions (including Creative Ireland & Commemorations)	16	Kevin Lonergan
Culture Ireland, International & Education	10	Christine Sisk
Cultural Schemes	5	John Kennedy

The Arts Division accounts for 43% of the Department's allocation in 2017 and is responsible for overseeing much of the State's cultural services, as well as leading on the commemorative programmes for the Decade of Centenaries. It has a current programme budget in 2017 of €122.8m and a capital programme budget of €27.6m (excluding €11.548m in capital carried over from 2016). These cultural services (and therefore funding) are, in the main, delivered through agencies and cultural institutions, including the Arts Council (€65m current funding), the Irish Film Board (€12.7m capital) and other National Cultural Institutions².

The Department also supports a range of smaller institutions and organisations with core funding (such as the Hunt Museum in Limerick, Siamsa Tíre, the Little Museum of Dublin, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann etc.) and operates a number of schemes of support in the cultural sector in areas not generally supported by the Arts Council.

² The National Cultural Institutions (which are all supported by the Department) include the National Museum of Ireland, the National Gallery of Ireland, the National Library of Ireland, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Chester Beatty Library, the National Concert Hall and the Crawford Gallery in Cork.

A significant part of the Division's work entails ongoing interaction with the 7 National Cultural Institutions and the 2 funding agencies (the Arts Council and the Irish Film Board). Issues mainly revolve around the provision of funding and staffing, the appointment of Boards and Directors, and the delivery of services in accordance with Performance Delivery Agreements. The Department has advanced a number of legislative reform proposals in relation to the cultural institutions in recent years, with the National Concert Hall being placed on a statutory footing in 2016.

In recent months significant Departmental energy has been devoted to developing and implementing the *Creative Ireland Programme/Clár Éire Ildánach*³ – a whole-of-government programme which aims to place culture and creativity at the heart of public policy in Ireland. The programme was inspired by the positive response from the public to the *Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme* where cultural expression was central to the success of the Programme. It also acts as the main vehicle to implement Culture 2025, the Department's draft cultural policy framework which the Department developed in 2016 and submitted to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in July last year.

The Department has the lead role in delivering and co-ordinating a commemorative Programme over the Decade of Centenaries (World War I through to Civil War). This involves considerable cross-Government working with guidance to date provided by an Expert Advisory Group of historians and an All-Party Oireachtas Group. The 1916 Commemoration (and particularly Easter Weekend) marked the centrepiece of this programme last year. Key commemorations this year include the commemoration of the Battle of Messines (June), the death of Francis Ledwidge and supporting the commemoration of events in Ireland during 2017 including the death of Thomas Ashe.

A significant programme of capital works to mark the 1916 centenary, were completed last year including a new visitor centre at the GPO and projects in the National Concert Hall and Richmond Barracks. A €30m+ project to redevelop the National Gallery has just been completed and the official re-opening of the 2 wings of the Gallery, following a 6 year closure took place on 14 June. In addition, a €10m project to carry out necessary work on the National Library is about to commence. The Department is also administering a new €9m capital grants scheme over 3 years for the upgrading of existing arts and cultural centres.

³ See page 10 for further details of *Creative Ireland*

1. Arts, Film and Investment

This business unit is managing expenditure of €101.6m in 2017 (excluding capital carryover from 2016) spread across six subheads. It has responsibility for liaising with the Arts Council, Irish Film Board, National Library and National Archives.

Key deliverables include:-

- Managing grants to statutory bodies such as the Arts Council, Irish Film Board (IFB) and National Library of Ireland (NLI).
- Overseeing the completion of a consultants' report and developing a new policy on the Irish audio-visual industry, as one of the key pillars of the Government's *Creative Ireland Programme*.
- Developing an overall capital Culture and Heritage Capital Investment Plan in the context of the Government's Mid Term Review of Capital Expenditure. This focuses on the investment needs of the National Cultural Institutions in particular and is also one of the five pillars of the *Creative Ireland Programme*.
- Administration of the new €9m arts and culture capital grants programme for upgrading existing arts and cultural infrastructure around the country.
- Continuing oversight and work on existing capital grants, under a number of pre-existing schemes.
- Progress on the National Cultural Institutions investment programme in the National Archives of Ireland (€8m) and National Library of Ireland (€10m).
- Legislation and policy supports to reduce the period for release of records by Government Departments from 30 years to 20 years.
- Advancing the Bank of Ireland College Green "*White Box*" Exhibition project, funded by Bank of Ireland, which will host a major Seamus Heaney exhibition hosted by the National Library.
- Progress implementation of the National Genealogy Policy as approved by Government in December 2012.

2. Cultural Policy and Institutions

This business unit has responsibility for liaising with the National Museum, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Chester Beatty Library, the National Concert Hall and the Crawford Gallery in Cork. The unit also encompasses the Creative Ireland Project Office and the Commemorations Unit (which are dealt with separately below).

Key work areas include:

- Securing appropriate funding for all relevant cultural institutions and agencies/bodies at both national and regional level.
- Progressing improvements to National Cultural Institutions infrastructure in line with capital provision.
- Continuing work on reform of legal and governance structures of National Cultural Institutions.
- Board appointments to relevant bodies.

3. Creative Ireland Programme

On 8 December 2016, the *Creative Ireland Programme* was launched as the Government's Legacy Programme arising out of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme and as the main implementation vehicle for the priorities identified in Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach. The *Creative Ireland Programme* is a high-level, 5-year initiative, from 2017 to 2022, (building up to the centenary of the foundation of the State) which aims to place creativity at the centre of public policy. It is designed to mainstream creativity in the life of the nation so that individually and collectively, Irish people can realise their full creative potential. The Programme is an 'All of Government programme' which is being led by the Department in partnership with other Government Departments and Agencies, local authorities, the third level sector, arts and culture organisations (including the National Cultural Institutions), media organisations and relevant NGOs.

The *Creative Ireland programme* is based on five core pillars as set out below:

Pillar 1: Enabling the Creative Potential of Every Child

Giving every child in Ireland access to tuition and participation in art, music, drama and coding, and fast tracking initiatives such as the Charter for Arts in Education

Pillar 2: Enabling Culture and Creativity in Every Community

The establishment of Culture Teams in each local authority tasked with developing a County Culture and Creativity Plan and the roll-out of *Cruinniú na Cásca*, an annual programme of arts activities and cultural reflection on Easter Monday

Pillar 3: Investing in our Cultural Infrastructure

Developing an overall five year capital strategy for the cultural and heritage sector in the context of feeding into the Mid-term Review of the Capital Programme in 2017

Pillar 4: Ireland: A Centre of Excellence in Media Production

Develop Ireland's potential to be a global leader in the creative industries and a leading international centre for media production

Pillar 5: Unifying our Global Reputation

Maximising the impact and visibility of Ireland and Irish culture and creativity internationally including developing a national portal website for Ireland, Ireland.ie

The work of the *Creative Ireland Programme* is overseen by a Cross-Departmental Senior Officials Group and a Cabinet Committee.

4. Commemorations Unit

This business unit has responsibility for delivering the State's response to the Decade of Centenaries (in partnership with other key Departments including D/Taoiseach, Defence, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Education and Skills etc.). The focus now is on planning for the second half of the Decade of Centenaries including, the period covering the War of Independence and Civil War. In this regard, the approach of the Department/Government is guided by the Expert Advisory Group (composed of historians) and an All-Party Group on Commemorations which it is proposed to re-establish shortly.

5. Cultural Schemes

This business unit has responsibility for supporting a number of cultural bodies nationwide which do not fall within the category of national cultural institution; supporting a number of other cultural initiatives which do not come within the remit of the Arts Council and for a number of other policy issues. This unit also has responsibility for liaising with the National Gallery of Ireland.

Key objectives include:

- Provision of funding, subject to Performance Delivery Agreements, with significant cultural bodies (outside the main National Cultural Institutions). These include the Hunt Museum Limerick, Foynes Flying Boat Museum, the Science Gallery (Trinity College), the Little Museum of Dublin, as well as Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and Siamsa Tíre, Tralee.
- Administering small budget grant schemes for North South Co-operation, Local and Regional Museums, Mobility of Collections etc.
- Operation of Tax Relief Scheme for donations (section 481).
- Developing policy on Export Licensing, the Percent for Arts Scheme, Philanthropy etc.
- Organising Culture Night in September each year in collaboration with local authorities across the island of Ireland

6. Culture Ireland, International and Education

Culture Ireland is a unit within the Department which is responsible for showcasing Irish culture on the international stage, primarily by funding artists to travel abroad. The unit also manages other issues in the international arena arising from our membership of the EU and UNESCO.

Key objectives include:

- Managing Culture Ireland's grant programmes to increase high-level opportunities for Irish artists internationally.
- Presenting a year-round programme of high quality Irish arts in areas of geographic priority, with a special focus around the St Patrick's Day period, in cooperation with other State agencies.
- Delivering targeted global promotion of specific art-forms at key international and national showcase events to gain future opportunities for Irish artists.
- Delivering a targeted cultural programme in Britain in 2018.
- Supporting Galway local authorities in delivering the European Capital of Culture in 2020.
- Advancing Ireland's nominations to the UNESCO representative list of intangible cultural heritage (Uilleann Piping and Hurling are the first 2 areas nominated for recognition).
- Providing input into international arts/cultural policy making.

Heritage – Key Priorities

Assistant Secretary – Niall Ó Donnchú

Overview

The goal of the Department's Heritage Division is to conserve and manage Ireland's unique heritage as a support to economic renewal and sustainable employment and in compliance with legal obligations. Heritage Division works to ensure that Ireland has policies and legislation in place to meet modern requirements working in compliance with EU and international heritage obligations. The Heritage Division comprises six business units which together have 409 staff:

Business Unit	Staff	Principal Officer
National Monuments	46	Terry Allen
Built Heritage and Architectural Policy	19	Martin Colreavy
NPWS – Strategy & Regional Operations	245	Trevor Donnelly
NPWS – Legislation, Licensing & Property	28	John FitzGerald
NPWS – Peatland Issues & Land Designation	31	Brian Lucas
NPWS – Science & Biodiversity	40	Ciarán O'Keeffe

The Heritage Division accounts for 12.4% of the Department's allocation in 2017 and has a programme budget of €23.348m, comprising €13.828m for current expenditure and €9.52m for capital projects (excluding €2m in capital carried over from 2016). The Heritage Division also has responsibility for Waterways Ireland whose 2017 allocation amounts to €22.856m. In addition, it receives an allocation from the Environment Fund which will amount to just over €3.876m in 2017.

The Heritage Division is responsible for Ireland's built and natural heritage, including national monuments, national parks and nature reserves. It has oversight responsibility for the Heritage Council. It is responsible for the transposition of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives into Irish law, the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and has key roles in relation to the Wildlife Acts and the protection, in general, of our flora and fauna.

It has a key role also in relation to heritage tourism and the presentation of the national parks, reserves, trails, and national monuments to domestic and international visitors. The national parks attract upwards of 3 million visitors per annum and a similar number of visitors enjoy the National

Monuments in state care every year. In its own right, it manages a number of prominent heritage properties and liaises closely with many of the national cultural institutions, in particular the National Museum, in regard to our natural, built and maritime heritage and activity tourism. Two significant projects which are currently being managed are the proposed restoration of the National Monument at 14-17 Moore Street having regard to the outcome of the High Court action taken against the Minister and the restoration of the historic Killarney House and Gardens.

The Division also has oversight responsibility in relation to Ireland's UNESCO World Heritage sites - Skellig Michael and Brú na Bóinne. It also manages a number of ongoing EU law compliance cases under the aforementioned Directives the case relating to peatlands conservation.

The Division is also responsible for land designation and the peatlands conservation policy.

1. National Monuments Unit

The National Monuments Unit works in close collaboration with the Office of Public Works in particular, to preserve and protect designated national monuments. Key activities include:

- Enactment of Monuments Bill – this proposed Bill will consolidate and update the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, leading to a more efficient protection and archaeological licensing system.
- Archaeological Survey of Ireland – updating the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
- National Monument at 14-17 Moore Street – management of the proposed restoration project and related issues, having regard to the outcome of the High Court action taken against the Minister.
- Conservation of National Monuments in State Care – provide archaeological advice and input to conservation and presentation of national monuments.
- Licensing – issue of Ministerial Consents, Directions and Licences in accordance with the National Monuments Acts.
- Planning – responding to development application as statutory consultee under the Planning Acts.
- Monument Protection – dealing with reports of threats or damage to monuments in accordance with the National Monuments Acts.
- Management of Ireland's World Heritage portfolio and progression of sites on the Tentative List (Ireland currently has 2 World Heritage Sites - Brú na Bóinne and Skellig Michael).

2. Built Heritage and Architectural Policy Unit

The responsibilities of the unit include developing, promoting and implementing policies and legislation for the protection of architectural heritage and promoting best practice in modern architecture & urban design.

Key policy developments and capital investment strategies include:

- Continued implementation of fiscal strategies regarding incentives for Built Heritage, including tax incentives and heritage-led regeneration or reuse policies via local authorities and other Government Departments.
- Manage continued investment of the Built Heritage €3.274m capital programme, including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Structures at Risk Fund.
- Implementation of the National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025.
- Conclude Review of Part (IV) Planning & Development Acts 2000.
- Review of the Government Policy on Architecture.
- Continued support for the Irish Heritage Trust, Irish Historic Houses Association and Irish Architectural Foundation.
- Completion of National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).
- Action Plan for the Sustainable Future of the Irish Historic House in Private Ownership 2015.
- Ongoing support of the Heritage Council, including its funding (voted allocation of €6.254m) and relevant board appointments.
- Final stages of the Heritage Bill 2016.

3. NPWS Strategy and Regional Operations

This section oversees the management and development of the State's 6 National Parks and 72 Nature Reserves for conservation purposes, the provision of public access and the strategic management of regional operations. The section consists of 3 distinct areas: Finance and Organisation Unit, Parks and Reserve Unit and the Regional NPWS Staff.

Key deliverables include the following:-

- Ongoing management and development of key properties at the 6 National Parks and 78 Nature Reserves (79,000 hectares): Given the resource constraints arising from reductions in recent years and demands arising from the imminent completion of the Killarney House project (see below), the focus is primarily on essential health and safety maintenance works. Alternative

funding models for projects with a tourism focus on State lands are being pursued through the Strategic Partnership with Fáilte Ireland.

- Killarney House: This is an €8m project to develop Killarney House and Gardens as the main visitor and interpretative centre for Killarney National Park. The final phase of works to the House and Gardens is complete and the House is scheduled to be opened officially on 4 July.
- Turf Cutting: Continue ongoing work on monitoring turf cutting issues in relation to raised bog Special Areas of Conservation.
- Muckross House: The Department will continue to work with the Trustees of Muckross House to manage and develop the property, including the carrying out of an agreed capital development programme.
- Management of resources to meet the requisite operational and policy needs: Increased funding has been provided in 2017 and a recruitment panel for Conservation Rangers (the first since 2008) is now in place. Recruitment from that panel is ongoing.

4. NPWS Legislation, Licensing & Property

The main responsibilities of this section are to:

- Advance legislative provisions to allow for de-designation of certain existing raised bog National Heritage Area (NHA) sites (as identified in the raised bog NHA Review).
- Provide guidance to public authorities on their obligations/compliance with EU Nature Directives and Irish Regulations.
- Update the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.
- Co-ordinate built and natural heritage responses to applications referred to Minister in role as statutory consultee under Planning legislation (about 6,000 per annum) and other non-planning context (1,500 per annum).
- Issue various licences under Wildlife Acts (over 7,000, including some 4,500 deer hunting licences).
- Hare Coursing: review reports on last season and consider licences for 2017 season.
- Deliver the final stages of the Heritage Bill 2016, which includes provisions related to nature conservation, notably in relation to hedge cutting and burning.

5. NPWS Peatland Issues & Land Designation

The section consists of the following units: (i) Peatlands Management Unit (ii) Site Protection Unit (including administration of turf compensation scheme) (iii) Bog Relocation Support Unit and (iv) Designations Unit (including Peatlands Policy). The main responsibilities of the unit are:

- Respond to the EU Reasoned Opinion regarding the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation programme and associated issues.
- Leading on the response to the EU turf-cutting infringement case which includes co-ordinating the overall response and liaising with the European Commission, as well as driving the implementation of specific measures aimed at resolving the case, including the provision of compensation/relocation and bog restoration.
- Overseeing the designation by the Minister of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) further to EU and national obligations.
- Co-ordinating the response to other EU nature infringement cases, particularly the case in relation to formal designation of SACs.

The key 2017 business issues and deliverables are:

- Finalise the National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan.
- Commence implementation of the Department's National Peatlands Strategy actions and monitor implementation of actions by other Government Departments/State bodies. Submit first National Peatlands Strategy progress report to the Government.
- Proceed with de-designation of certain existing raised bog NHA sites (as identified in the raised bog NHA Review published in January 2014), subject to enactment of legislation.
- Proceed with designation of new NHA sites (in line with the raised bog NHA Review - January 2014).
- Continue with SAC and SPA designation programme.
- Continue to implement the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme in respect of raised bog SAC and NHA sites in terms of making annual compensation payments, turf deliveries, and legal agreement payments.
- Move forward with the relocation element of the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme, in particular, in terms of progressing the movement of qualifying applicants to suitable relocation sites in non-designated bogs.
- Advance the EU LIFE Raised Bog Restoration Project on the 12 raised bog SAC project sites.

6. NPWS Science and Biodiversity

The key function of this unit is to manage, foster and oversee our compliance obligations with domestic and international birds and habitats legislation and conservation objectives. 2017 business issues and priorities include:

- European Court Infringement Cases:
 - The Birds Case: work in regard to the Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan, the completion of scientific input to the appeals process for SPAs and preparation of the management plan for corncrake in Donegal.
 - The SAC Designations Case: input to the designations process and the drafting/publication of Conservation Objectives for SACs.
 - The Bogs Case: implementation of the National Peatland Strategy in regard to raised bogs, and commencement of scientific survey towards peatland management on blanket bogs, following consultation with local communities.
 - The Sufficiency of SACs/SPAs Case: continue offshore survey programme with D/CENR.
 - The Pearl Mussel Case: manage Kerry LIFE project on pearl mussel; remove pearl mussel as qualifying interest for Blackwater River (Cork); work on agriculture and forestry schemes with D/AFM.
- Proposed amendment to Wildlife Act - Advice on conditions required in the regulation on burning and guidelines on hedge cutting.
- EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species - Prepare discussion paper for Minister, draft appropriate Regulations, including amendment to the EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 to regulate the import and sale of invasive species in compliance with EU trade rules.
- Biodiversity - Draft new Biodiversity Plan for period 2017-2020.
- Flooding - Provide scientific advice on Shannon issues and the Catchment-Based Flood Risk Assessment and Management System (CFRAMS).

Regional and Rural Affairs - Key Priorities

Assistant Secretary – William Parnell

Overview

The goal of the Department's Regional Development and Rural Affairs Division is to progress the economic and social development of rural Ireland and contribute to effective regional development. It is a relatively new programme area for the Department under the reconfiguration of Departmental functions in 2016. In accordance with the *Programme for a Partnership Government*, the Minister has responsibility for providing greater political co-ordination and prioritisation of the work across Government Departments which impacts on rural Ireland. The **Action Plan for Rural Development** provides the framework for a cohesive and strategic whole-of-Government approach to developing rural Ireland. The Department works closely with other Departments – and particularly DJEI and DHPCLG – in delivering on this Programme objective.

The Regional and Rural Affairs Division comprises four business units which together have 53 staff:

Business Unit	Staff	Principal Officer
Rural Strategy	6	Sinead Copeland
Rural Policy & Schemes	16	Finola Moylette
LEADER programme	16	JP Mulherin
Inspectorate Services	8	Paul McGoldrick
Rural Broadband & Post Offices	7	Stjohn O'Connor

The Regional and Rural Affairs Division accounts for 21.5% of the Department's allocation in 2017, with a programme budget of €76.1m, comprising €67.4m for capital projects and €8.7m for current expenditure.

Action Plan for Rural Development

- *Realising our Rural Potential*, the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development was launched at the end of January. It contains 276 actions for the delivery across Government, State agencies and other bodies over the next three years to support the economic and social progress of rural Ireland.
- A key objective of the Action Plan is to change the narrative around rural Ireland. Rural Ireland is modern, dynamic and a key part of our identity and our economy. It is important to change the perception that rural Ireland is disadvantaged and a drain on resources.

- Previously, policy approaches to rural Ireland have focused on specific thematic issues such as agriculture or social inclusion and have not addressed the wider and inter-dependent economic and social needs of rural communities in a cohesive way. The Action Plan for Rural Development is the first of its kind to take a co-ordinated approach to rural development right across the remit of Government policy.
- Progress on the implementation of the individual actions, and of the Plan as a whole, will be overseen by a Monitoring Committee. Progress Reports will be published twice-yearly, with the first report due by the end of July 2017. The Cabinet Committee on Regional and Rural Affairs will also monitor the progress of the Plan on a regular basis.

Development of a National Policy for Social Enterprise

The Action Plan for Rural Development includes a commitment to develop and publish a National Policy on Social Enterprise in order to set a clear direction for this sector. It is intended to develop and publish the National Policy on Social Enterprise before the end of the year. This will be a comprehensive piece of work which maps out the spectrum of activities in the sector in Ireland, the supports required by organisations at different points on the spectrum, the type of supports available through Government, and a roadmap for the development of the sector.

Atlantic Economic Corridor

In February 2016, a proposal for the development of an Atlantic Economic Corridor was published by the Chambers of Commerce of Limerick, Shannon, Ennis, Galway, Roscommon, Mayo, and Sligo and the American Chamber of Commerce. The aim of the proposal is to develop a 'city of scale' along the Western seaboard to offer an alternative option to the East Coast in terms of attracting Irish and multinational investment and growing jobs.

The Programme for a Partnership Government includes a commitment to progress the concept of the Atlantic Economic Corridor. In this context, an Atlantic Economic Corridor Taskforce has been established to provide a platform for engagement between stakeholders from the private and public sectors and the wider community to maximise the potential of the Western seaboard. There is widespread support for the initiative amongst all sectors, including Government Departments and agencies.

The Taskforce was chaired by the Minister of State for Regional Economic Development. It meets every 8-10 weeks, with the next meeting of the Taskforce scheduled to take place on 25th July.

The Department has also been working closely with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to ensure that the Atlantic Economic Corridor is reflected in the forthcoming National Planning Framework.

Rural Development Programmes

The Department administers a number of funding programmes to support rural development. These programmes include:

- Town & Village Renewal Scheme
- CLÁR programme
- Rural Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure programme
- Walks Scheme

The 2017 provision for these, and some other smaller schemes, is €27.283 million.

Allocations under the CLÁR programme for this year have recently been announced. Applications under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme (closing date 30th June) and Rural Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure programme will be assessed over the next 6 weeks.

Western Development Commission

The Western Development Commission (WDC) was established in 1999 under statute to promote, foster and encourage economic and social development in the Western Region, defined as the counties of Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway and Clare. Its activities involve policy development and analysis, undertaking key regional initiatives and management of the Western Investment Fund (WIF) which provides loans to SMEs.

The Programme for a Partnership Government includes a specific commitment to reinforce the role of the WDC so that it supports the implementation of the regional Action Plans for Jobs in the West and North-West. In this context, the WDC has been involved in an increasing number of initiatives (e.g. Regional Action Plan for Jobs Implementing Committees, the Atlantic Economic Corridor Taskforce), some of which go beyond the role the body has played to date.

The WDC has been operating for 18 years, but there have also been a number of important policy and operational developments at regional level in recent years which have synergies the remit of the Commission. In particular, the statutory role conferred on the Local Authorities and the Regional Assemblies in relation to local and regional economic development under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 will increasingly change the operating environment for the WDC.

One of the earliest tasks for the incoming Minister will to appoint a new Board to the WDC. An Assessment Panel appointed by the Public Appointments Service has short-listed candidates for the Minister's consideration. The opportunity should also be taken to provide the incoming Board with a new mandate which reflects the changed operating environment within which it operates.

Once the Board is appointed, a competition to appoint a CEO will be run. The WDC is currently operating with an Acting CEO.

LEADER Programme

The LEADER programme is a significant EU co-financed programme to support rural development. It has a total budget of €250 million over the period 2014-2020. Effectively however, the programme only commenced in 2016 when allocations were made to each LEADER region.

Concerns have been expressed by many community projects regarding some of the administrative procedures related to the new programme which have delayed its implementation. On 17th May, the Minister hosted a forum with participants from all of the Local Action Groups and the Local Development Companies delivering LEADER, to explore the issues of concern to them and to identify potential solutions aimed at streamlining the current administrative and application procedures.

On the basis of the feedback at the forum, over 30 action points were identified by the Department which will help streamline the administrative processes on the programme. The Minister has written to all of the Local Action Groups and Local Development Companies to update them on the changes that the Department intends to make.

Rural Broadband

The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (CCAEC) has policy responsibility for national broadband policy through the National Broadband Plan (NBP). The NBP aims to provide access to high speed broadband to every premises in Ireland. This is being done through a mix of connections made on a purely commercial basis by telecoms operators, and through a State subvention in areas where it is not commercially viable to make the connections. DCCAEC is currently overseeing a procurement process for the award of contracts for the State intervention area.

DHARRGA is responsible for ensuring that Local Authorities are ready to support service providers once contract(s) for the State intervention area under the NBP are in place. The Department has provided funding to each local authority for the assignment of a dedicated contact point for broadband issues. The appointment of these Broadband Officers will ensure a greater level of consistency in engagement with telecoms operators and clearing obstacles to rollout of infrastructure under the NBP. To date, 30 of the 31 local authorities have appointed a Broadband Officer. The remaining local authority is currently recruiting and is expected to appoint a Broadband Officer shortly.

The Department has established two Regional Action Groups, involving all local authorities, to identify and remove barriers to network rollout, including in relation to issues such as access, planning, environmental issues, legislation and road openings.

Separate to the National Broadband Plan, the Minister, along with the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Department co-chair an Implementation Group which is driving the delivery of the recommendations made by the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce, which published its report in December 2016. The Taskforce made 40 recommendations to improve mobile phone coverage and broadband access in the short-term. The next meeting of the Implementation Group is scheduled for July.

Post Office Network

The Programme for a Partnership Government made a number of commitments in relation to the Post Office network which were assigned to this Department. The commitments in question have now been completed or are significantly advanced.

There have been a number of developments in relation to postal services generally since the Programme for a Partnership Government was agreed in May 2016, including the commissioning by An Post of a root and branch review of the company.

Overall responsibility for the postal sector, including the governance of An Post, falls (and always has been) under the remit of the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment. In light of developments in the sector, it was agreed at a Government meeting at the end of March that all aspects of the postal services, including the Post Office network, should again be under the remit of the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Programme Inspectorate

The Regional & Rural Affairs Division has a small Inspectorate which carries out spot-checks on rural development programmes to provide assurance that funding has been spent correctly. Most of the Unit's work relates to the LEADER programme, which is governed by a complex set of EU rules. The Unit is also available to carry out checks on other rural development programmes such as CLÁR and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Gaeilge, Gaeltacht, Islands and North-South - Key Priorities

Stiúrthóir na Gaeilge / Director of Irish– Aodhán MacCormaic

Overview

The goals of the Department's Gaeltacht Division are to support the Irish language, to strengthen its use as the principal community language of the Gaeltacht, to assist the sustainable development of island communities and to promote North South co-operation, particularly in the context of the North South Implementation Body it co-funds - An Foras Teanga (comprising Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency). The Department funds and works closely with Údarás na Gaeltachta as the regional development agency for the Gaeltacht and Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga, the independent statutory body that monitors the implementation of the Official Languages Act 2003. The Department also facilitates the delivery of services to Island communities, both in the Gaeltacht and outside the Gaeltacht. The Gaeltacht Division has 59 staff, 8 of whom are assigned to an Coimisinéir Teanga with the remaining 51 working in the following business units:

Business Unit	Staff	Principal Officer
Irish Language Support Schemes, Official Languages Act, Irish in the EU	9	Micheál Ó Conaire
Gaeltacht Support Schemes, Language Planning, 20 Year Strategy, Údarás na Gaeltachta	27	Bertie Ó hAinmhire
Foras na Gaeilge, Placenames and Islands	15	Sorcha de Brúch

The Gaeltacht Division accounts for 23% of the Department's allocation in 2017 with a programme budget of €78.605m, comprising €13.528m for capital projects and €65.077m for current expenditure. €22.856m of this budget relates to the 2017 allocation for Waterways Ireland for whom the Heritage Division have responsibility.

Significant issues arising in the coming period include the publication of key strategic priorities for the next 5 years under the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language, as well completing the consultation process with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Education and Skills regarding future policy on early years education in the Gaeltacht. On the broader Irish language side, work is ongoing with the European Commission and the other main EU institutions aimed at ending the derogation on the use of the Irish language in the EU by 2022.

A number of issues are ongoing in the context of the Official Languages Act 2003, including the commencement of drafting of the Official Languages (Amendment) Bill 2017, the updating of the list of public bodies covered under the Act and the approval over the coming period of up to 20-25 statutory language schemes proposed by public bodies.

With regard to the islands, the key issues will be the putting in place of a long term passenger ferry contract for the Aran Islands by end October 2017 and the resolution of service level issues regarding the recently agreed Aran Islands' PSO air contract.

1. Irish Language Policy and the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030

Key priorities include:

- Continue implementation of the 20-Year Strategy through a range of Irish language support schemes.
- Publish the main strategic priorities for the five year period from 2016 in order to advance the implementation of the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030*.
- Progress projects and initiatives, including the text to speech synthesis project *Abair.ie*, digitisation projects in UCD and the RIA and the LEX programme for the provision of terminology for EU institutions.
- Irish Language Derogation: Maintain and enhance cooperative structures with EU institutions for the implementation of Council Regulation 2015/2264.
- Publish a Digital Strategy for the Irish Language in Q3 2017.
- Establish a shared translation service for the civil service.

2. Official Languages Act 2003

Key priorities include:

- Delivery of 20 – 25 language schemes proposed by public bodies.
- Promote the recruitment of increased numbers of Irish speakers to the public service.
- Update by Regulation the First Schedule of the Official Languages Act 2003 listing all public bodies under its remit.
- Commence drafting of the Official Languages (Amendment) Bill 2017, the Heads of which were recently approved by Government.
- Amend Part 5 of the Act to allow for the making of placenames orders by enacting the Official Languages (Amendment) Bill 2017, the Heads of which have been approved by Government and published.

3. Gaeltacht and Islands

Key priorities in respect of the *Gaeltacht* are as follows:

- Further support and develop the Gaeltacht summer colleges in cooperation with their umbrella body CONCOS and the Department of Education and Skills.
- Assist with the development of community facilities in the Gaeltacht with the aim of maintaining and strengthening the Irish language as the spoken language of the community there.
- Underpin the role of Gaeltacht organisations involved in strengthening the use of the Irish language.
- Oversee and monitor the implementation by Údarás na Gaeltachta of the recommendations of the Review of Management Structure and Grading of Senior Management Posts within the organisation.
- The appointment of a new CEO of Údarás na Gaeltachta by September 2017 and of a new board for the organisation by November 2017.
- Review the operation of Scéim na gCuntóirí Teanga in cooperation with the Department of Education and Skills.
- Continue to progress the implementation of the language planning process under Acht na Gaeltachta 2012, while recognising the need for increased funding for this demand-led statutory process over the coming years.
- Endeavour to ensure best practice as regards governance in Údarás na Gaeltachta.
- Establish an Inter-Agency Task Force aimed at stemming population decline in Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh and improving the social and economic prospects of the region.

Key priorities in respect of the *Islands* are as follows:

- Co-ordinate Government policy in relation to the islands.
- Progress the implementation of the 4-year AranLIFE project (2014-2017) being funded under the EU's LIFE programme.
- Continue to ensure adequate infrastructure and all year round transport services to and from our offshore islands.
- Decide on the future use of airstrips at Cleggan and Inishbofin, Co. Galway.
- Provide funding and monitor the provision of community services on non-Gaeltacht offshore islands.

4. North-South Co-operation

An Foras Teanga is the North South Language Body, comprising Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency. Key priorities in this area include:

- Ensure continued oversight and governance of the two agencies through monitoring committee meetings and NSMC sectoral meetings, when recommenced.
- Completion of online dictionary project and approval of future lexicography strategy.
- Development of a number of schemes/initiatives to be advanced by Foras na Gaeilge - Scéim Phobail Ghaeilge, Líonraí Gaeilge and Bailte Seirbhísí Gaeltachta.
- Development and launch of the *Hairtlan* project by the Ulster-Scots Agency.

Corporate Division - Key Priorities

Assistant Secretary – Vacant (recruitment process underway)

Overview

The Corporate Division comprises the Offices of the Minister, Ministers of State and the Secretary-General and three business units, each headed by a Principal Officer: Corporate Governance & Services; Finance, Evaluation & ICT; and HR.

There are 106 staff in the area, accounting for some 14% of the Department's staff total of 725 (including 58 seasonal staff), operating across three business units:

Business Unit	Staff	Principal Officer
Corporate Governance & Services, Press Office	26	John Healy
Finance, Evaluation & ICT	27	Conor Falvey
HR, Learning & Development (incl. Internal Audit, Legal Advisor & Ministers Offices)	53	Catriona Ryan

Corporate Division is responsible for the Department's Administration Budget – almost €40m in 2017, equivalent to almost 11% of the Department's gross voted allocation of €368.422m. 83% of the Department's administration costs, some €33.265m, are in respect of salaries, while the balance of €6.68m is for ICT, accommodation, post and telecommunications, travel & subsistence, training and other overheads.

Much of Corporate Division's work is providing supports that are essential for the day-to-day running of the Department. These supports facilitate the delivery of services to the public and other external stakeholders by staff in other areas of the Department. While the main objective in 2017 is to continue to provide those supports, each area also has a number of key objectives designed to deliver improvements in the Department's internal arrangements and advance whole-of-government initiatives in areas such as implementing the Civil Service Renewal Plan.

Any transfer of functions involving this Department that may be required by the Government will, of course, become the key priority activity for the Division.

The key priorities for Corporate Division in 2017 are:

Corporate Governance & Services, Press Office

- Coordinate response to Brexit including preparation of Adaptive Sectoral Plan.
- Prepare a new Departmental Statement of Strategy for the period 2017-2020 for submission to Minister as required.
- Monitor progress in implementing the *Programme for Government*.
- Review Risk Management Policy and implement enhanced arrangements.
- Continue to develop Health & Safety Policies and arrangements across the Department.
- Further improve the recording and management of the Department's assets.
- Oversee implementation of new Records Management Policies.
- Coordinate and oversee preparations to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulation due to come into effect in May 2018.
- Coordinate and oversee preparations to ensure compliance with Children First Legislation
- Oversee compliance with revised Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies.
- Organise the 2017 National and International Famine Commemorations.

Finance, Evaluation and ICT

- Monitor and manage the Department's 2017 expenditure, as well as the annual Estimates and Budget process.
- Coordinate Department's input to Current and Capital Expenditure Review processes
- Continue to contribute to the development of the Financial Management Shared Service (FMSS) and commence preparatory work for migration to the FMSS in Q1 2019.
- Further embedding of evaluation, through Quality Approval Process.
- Continued oversight of procurement functions, with particular reference to use of Office of Government Procurement frameworks.
- Migrate Heritage Division ICT services from D/ECLG to integrated D/AHG network.
- Progress implementing new document management system based on SharePoint.
- Implement ePQ and eSubmissions system.

HR, Learning & Development

- Provide a robust HR function which supports the Department's business and provides relevant HR support and advice to bodies under the aegis of the Department.
- Manage delegated sanction/staffing control framework arrangements for State Agencies under the aegis of the Department.
- Implement the Civil Service Renewal Plan, including implementation of action plan in response to employee engagement survey, a new internal communications architecture, new performance management system, departmental mobility policy and developing a gender balance action plan for the Department.
- Implement Workforce Plan to maintain key capabilities in the context of delegated authority in staffing matters and related financial targets.
- Implement a Training Strategy to develop key skills, develop staff and build the Department's capacity.
- Act as State Boards Liaison officer for appointments, through the Public Appointments Service, to Boards under the aegis of the Department.

APPENDIX I

State Bodies and Agencies under the remit of the Department

Programme area	Agency	2017 allocation €000s		
		Current	Capital	Total
Programme A: Arts, Culture & Film	Irish Museum of Modern Art	4,748	320	5,068
	Chester Beatty Library	2,346	175	2,521
	National Concert Hall	2,449	260	2,709
	Crawford Gallery	1,176	162	1,338
	Arts Council	65,057	93	65,150
	National Museum of Ireland	11,743	1,108	12,851
	National Library of Ireland	6,815	478	7,293
	Irish Film Board	3,786	12,702	16,488
	National Gallery of Ireland	8,536	858	9,394
Programme B: Heritage	Heritage Council	3,566	2,688	6,254
	Irish Heritage Trust	374		374
Programmes C&D: Irish Language, Gaeltacht & Islands, North South Co-operation	Údarás na Gaeltachta	12,208	6,687	18,895
	Foras Teanga	13,989		13,989
	Waterways Ireland	20,179	2,680	22,859
Programme E: Regional Development and Rural Affairs	Western Development Commission	1,495	1,000	2,495

APPENDIX II

Legislation currently under development or proposed – June 2017

1) Arts, Film and Investment

Title of Legislation: National Archives (Amendment) Bill 2017

Purpose: To amend the time period from 30 years to 20 years after which Departmental records have to be transferred to the National Archives.

Current Status: Stamped by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) and ready to place on eCabinet for Departmental observations and Government approval.

Next step (incl Date): Circulate to Government Departments on eCabinet

Key contact in Dept: Sharon Barry AP, Arts Unit

2) National Monuments

Title of Legislation: Monuments and Archaeological Heritage Bill

Purpose: To repeal all existing National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 and certain related legislation (some going back to the 19th century) and replace with single modern Act, key elements of which are as follows –

- Establishment of a single Register of Monuments in place of current multiple systems for protecting monuments;
- Provision for first time for automatic interim protection of newly discovered archaeological monuments;
- Replacement of current multiple and overlapping systems of licences and consents with single integrated licensing system with measures included to ensure transparency and fairness;
- Strengthening of enforcement procedures, including provision for first time of civil enforcement procedures;
- Provision of a clear legal basis for the role of Commissioners of Public Works in regard to management of national monuments in State care and clarification of relationship between the Commissioners and the Minister;
- Provision of clearer powers to manage national monuments in State care, in particular through the making of bye-laws;
- Placing of World Heritage Sites on a clear legal footing under Irish law;
- Provision of measures to allow Ireland to ratify key international conventions relating to protection of underwater cultural heritage and illicit dealing in cultural objects;
- In general, removal of a range of anomalies and gaps in existing legislation and provision of a modern and coherent legislative framework which can be accessed in one Act rather than in a series of Acts which have been subject to multiple amendments.

Current Status: Heads of Bill approved by Government in April 2010. Drafting commenced in 2012. First draft of all substantive parts completed autumn 2014. Drafting delayed in 2015 to 2016 but recommenced late 2016. Parts 1 and 2 (which comprise nearly half of Bill and deal with, inter alia, the new Register of Monuments and national monuments in State care) have now been fully revised to take account, in particular, of the outcome of the High Court decision on Moore Street.

Next step (incl Date): Completion of full revision of text drafted as of late 2014 resulting in full final draft Bill which can be submitted to Government for approval to initiate in Oireachtas. Complete draft Bill should be available in autumn 2017 if drafting resources in Office of the Parliamentary Counsel continue to be allocated to the Bill and if instructing officer in the Department continues to be able to assign time to the project.

Key contact in Dept: Terry Allen, Principal Officer National Monuments Service.

3) Built Heritage

Title of Legislation: Heritage Bill

Purpose: To amend certain sections of the Heritage Act 1995 arising from the Report of the Critical Review of the Heritage Council concluded in June 2012 and approved by Government in 2013. The Bill also amends the Canals Act 1986 in order to provide enabling provisions in primary legislation to allow the making of bye-laws for the regulation of boating on the canals. This is being done on the basis of legal advice received with a view to ensuring that such bye-laws will be legally robust. The Bill also makes provision for the regulation of cutting or burning of vegetation, as provided for in Government Decision No. S140/98/01/0001 and provides for clarification of the powers of authorised officers under the Wildlife Acts.

Current Status: Passed by the Seanad, currently at Second Stage in the Dáil (started on 31st May but not yet concluded)

Next step (incl Date): Second stage in the Dáil to be resumed. No firm date, but likely to be in next couple of weeks.

Key contact in Dept: Ciara Carberry

4) Gaeilge agus Gaeltacht

Title of Legislation: Official Languages (Amendment) Bill 2017

Purpose: The proposed Bill will give effect to amendments arising from the review of the Official Languages Act 2003, in addition to amendments required arising from the abolition of the Placenames Commission, as provided for in the Public Service Reform Plan of 2011. Central elements of this Bill are the manner in which Irish language speakers are recruited to the public service and the power provided to the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht

Affairs to specify by Regulation the manner in which Irish language speakers who are successful in Public Appointments Service (PAS) recruitment competitions are allocated to public bodies. Another significant element of the Bill is the replacement of the existing language scheme regime by the introduction of language standards for each government sector, with higher standards to be achieved by sectors with greater interaction with the public.

Current Status: Government approval received 30th May for the drafting of the Bill. General Scheme and Draft Heads of Bill published 2nd June.

Next step (June 2017): Work to now commence on the drafting of the Bill, in accordance with the draft scheme published, subject to further discussion with other Departments and legal consideration by the Office of the Attorney General.

Key contacts in Dept: Triona Ní Mhathuna / Micheál Ó Conaire / Aodhán Mac Cormaic

5) Rural Policy and Schemes

Title of Legislation: Occupiers Liability Act 1995

Purpose: To amend the act reinforcing the roles and responsibilities with regards to Recreational Users of the Countryside in light of the Wall Case. It is proposed also to insert a set of principles to underpin a National Indemnity Scheme for the Uplands Areas as well as conferring the power on the Minister to create SI to insert geographical areas into the scheme. It is proposed to commence the scheme with a number of pilot areas initially.

Current Status: The Section is currently preparing a submission to the Attorney General's Office (AGO) to ensure that the proposed course of action is legally sound.

Next step (incl Date): Begin the legislative process once the AGO has issued their opinion. Aim to complete the process by the end of the year.

Key contact in Dept: Finola Moylette, PO, Rural Schemes.

6) Corporate Governance

Title of Legislation: National Famine Commemoration Day Bill 2017

Purpose: Private Members Bill proposing to for the establishment of a National Famine Commemoration Day and related matters.

Current Status: The bill passed second stage in February 2017.

Next step (incl Date): Committee Stage date to be confirmed.

Key contact in Dept: John Healy

7) LEADER Unit

Title of Legislation: Provision for LEADER Administrative checks

Purpose: To empower the Minister to delegate the task of undertaking administrative checks on LEADER project applications to the Financial Partners (Local Authorities) in LEADER Local Action Groups

Current Status: This will not be a standalone piece of legislation. It is intended to incorporate this as a provision in primary legislation already being developed by the Department

Next step (incl Date): To identify legislation which can be used as the vehicle for this provision

Key contact in Dept: JP Mulherin, Denis McGowan

Secondary Legislation

1. Peatland Issues and Land Designation Section

Title of Legislation: European Communities (Raised Bog European Sites Co-existence Scheme) Regulations 2017

Purpose: To move applications for consent for turf cutting for domestic use on raised bog Special Areas of Conservation in accordance with article 6.3 or article 6.4 out of the planning system to an alternative consent system operated by the Minister (these draft regulations arise in response to a commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government (2016)).

Current Status: Draft regulations with Department's Legal Advisor for review

Next step (incl Date): Subject to and once the observations of the Department's Legal Advisor have been received it is intended to forward the draft regulations to the Minister for approval (in principle) before sending to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel for drafting. It is estimated that the draft regulations will be forwarded to the Minister towards the end of July 2017.

Key contact in Dept: Brian Lucas

2. NPWS Science & Biodiversity

Title of Legislation: European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2017

Purpose: To implement EU Regulation 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species

Current Status: Draft Regulations are at advanced stage

Next step (incl Date): Finalise draft regs and seek advice from Legal Advisor (July) on issues identified

Key contact in Dept: Alan Moore

3. NPWS Science & Biodiversity

Title of Legislation: European Union (Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing) Regulations 2017

Purpose: To implement EU Regulation 511/2014 on the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing

Current Status: Draft Regulations are at early drafting stage

Next step (incl Date): Consultation with other Departments and relevant stakeholders (July)

Key contact in Dept: Alan Moore

APPENDIX III

Membership of Oireachtas Committees

Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

Cathaoirleach: Peadar Tóibín, TD (SF)

Leas Cathaoirleach: Michael Collins TD (RIG)

Member	Party
Deputies (Dáil Select Committee)	
Ciaran Cannon	Fine Gael
Michael Collins	RIG
Danny Healy Rae	RIG
Martin Heydon	Fine Gael
Éamon Ó Cúiv	Fianna Fáil
Niamh Smyth	Fianna Fáil
Peadar Tóibín	Sinn Féin
Senators (Joint Committee)	
Maura Hopkins	Fine Gael
Marie-Louise O'Donnell	(Neamhspleách – Independent)
Aodhán Ó Ríordáin	Labour Party
Fintan Warfield	Sinn Féin

Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus na nOileán

Cathaoirleach: Caitríona Ní Chonghaile TD

Comhalta	Páirtí
Teachtaí:	
Caitríona Ní Chonghaile	Neamhspleách
Pat The Cope Ó Gallachóir	Fianna Fáil
Breandán Ó Grifín TD	Fine Gael
Aindrias Ó Muimhneacháin	Fianna Fáil
Fearghus Ó Dubhda	Fine Gael
Bríd Nic Gabhann	Pobal roimh Bhrabús
Peadar Tóibín TD	Sinn Féin
Seanadóirí:	
An Seanadóir Trevor Ó Clochartaigh	Sinn Féin
An Seanadóir Brian Ó Domhnaill	Fianna Fáil
An Seanadóir Rónán Mullen	Neamhspleách
An Seanadóir Seosamh Ó Raghallaigh	Fine Gael