



Tithe an
Oireachtais
Houses of
the
Oireachtas

**AN COMHCHOISTE UM CHOIMIRCE SHÓISIALACH, FORBAIRT POBAIL
AGUS TUAITHE AGUS NA HOILEÁIN**

CLÁR OIBRE

2020/2021

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL PROTECTION,
COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE
ISLANDS**

WORK PROGRAMME

2020/2021

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Committee Membership

Deputy Jackie Cahill - FF (JC)



Deputy Paul Donnelly – SF (PD)



Deputy Joe Carey - Fine Gael (JC)



Deputy Charles Flanagan – FG (CF)



Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh GP (MO)



Deputy Denis Naughten – Independent; Chairperson



Deputy Joan Collins - Independent 4 Change (JC)



Senator Paddy Burke – FG (PB)



Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív – FF(EO)



Senator Róisín Garvey – GP (RG)



Senator Paul Gavan - SF (PG)



Joint Committee on Employment Affairs and Social Protection Draft

Work Programme 2020/2021

1. Introduction

The Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development, and the Islands was established following Orders of Dáil Éireann on 30 July 2020 and Seanad Éireann on 25 September 2020.

Standing Orders 89(4) Dáil Éireann and 75(4) Seanad Éireann require that *"as soon as may be following its appointment and thereafter at annual intervals, each Select Committee shall prepare a work programme and shall lay such programme before Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann"*.

2. Select Committee

The function of the Select Committee is to consider Bills, Estimates and other business referred to it by Dáil Éireann which relate to the Department of Social Protection and Department of Community and Rural Development.

A. **Legislation (Bills) See 3(c) also**

Legislation to be introduced available in Legislation Programme Autumn Session 2020 at:

<https://assets.gov.ie/87242/bbb45d43-576e-4213-8055-15f56f2e7942.pdf>

B. **Estimates and other Financial Matters**

Select Committees are tasked with consideration of annual Estimates for Public Services that fall within their remit. The Estimates are Ministers' spending plans for the coming financial year.

When the Estimates are referred to Select Committees for consideration, this Committee will have an opportunity to question the Minister for Social Protection and Minister for Community and Rural Development on financial allocations and associated output targets for the coming year. A Revised Estimate was considered in October 2020 as additional monies were required by the Department of Community and Rural Development.

Note: the Select Committee is required to consider the Estimates but is not empowered to amend them.

C. **Referrals of Motions and Other Matters**

From time to time, matters may arise and may be referred to the Select Committee by the Dáil. It is not possible to say in advance what those matters might be or when they might arise.

3. Joint Committee

The duties of the Joint Committee are discharged in two ways (i) there will be items of business referred to it by one or both Houses and (ii) it can select business for consideration itself, from the areas within its terms of reference. In practice, the Joint Committee's core work comprises EU business and key policy and governance priorities.

A. EU Business

Scrutiny of EU Legislative Proposals

The scrutiny of draft EU legislative proposals will continue to be a standing agenda item of the Joint Committee. Draft proposals will be brought to the attention of the Joint Committee by setting out priority (Schedule A) and non-priority (Schedule B) items.

The Committee will seek information on relevant legislative proposals at the earliest stage after publication and invite submissions from stakeholders on same. It will also engage with relevant European Parliament Committees on legislative proposals and submit reports (Reasoned Opinions or Political Contributions) to EU Institutions in relation to proposed legislative changes.

Engagement with Ministers

Ministers of the Government attend EU Council meetings in their relevant policy areas and it is intended that the Joint Committee will invite the Minister for Social Protection and/or Minister for Community and Rural Development from time to time to give oral briefings either in advance of her attendance at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (ESPCO) Council meetings or following such meetings.

Engagement on the Statutory Departmental Scrutiny Report

There is a requirement under S.2(5) of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002 for Ministers to report twice yearly to both Houses on the measures, proposed measures and other developments in relation to the European Communities and the European Union connected with their departments. The Joint Committee can consider these reports with the Secretary-General of the Department.

Engagement with European Bodies

The Committee will continue to further its engagement with European bodies such as the EU Commission and the EU Parliament and its committees during 2020/2021, including delegation visits where appropriate.

B. Key policy priorities

The Joint Committee is empowered to consider such other policy issues as it may select within its terms of reference. During 2020/2021, in addition to core business such as legislation, it will be possible to focus on a few major topics within the remit of the Department, with the aim of submitting well-researched reports to the Houses.

The following are key policy issues suggested for examination:

Social Protection

- Examine Government response to COVID-19, including implementations of

recommendations in the final report of the Special Committee on COVID-19 Response

- Review the means-testing method and eligibility criteria to access social protection services
- Consideration of [Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- Energy poverty
- Use of Job Activation and Education to tackle unemployment
- Aer Lingus employees accessing social welfare supports
- Lone parents, in particular maintenance deductions
- Pensions: [Total Contributions Approach](#) and how it is working especially for carers and the self-employed
- Pricing policies for fares on non-urban public transport
- Streamline regulation and compliance requirements for charities
- Bogus self-employment: in English language school sector, in film industry, in construction, in journalism, in aviation
- Social enterprise
- [JobPath](#)
- Examination of the Working Family Payment (WFP)
- Review of K Class PRSI Contributions
- Review of Community Employment Scheme
- Review of the Carer's Allowance and income support or support for people in the home
- Review of supports for persons with disability e.g., Carer Allowances, Fuel Allowances, Restoration of Mobility Allowances, Enhanced benefits for severe disability
- Brexit implications

Rural and Community Development

- Examine Government response to COVID-19, including implementations of recommendations in the final report of the Special Committee on COVID-19 Response

- Review the Rural Social Scheme ([RSS](#)), [TÚS](#) and [Community Employment Scheme](#) – comparison between old and new schemes under [SICAP](#);
- Consideration of recommendations made by the Report of the Independent Review Group (IRG) on the role of voluntary organisations in publicly funded health and personal social services ([IRG report](#))
- Job creation
- Examine the [National Spatial Strategy](#)ⁱ and the [National Development Plan](#) in light of the permanent changes to society arising out of COVID-19
- Connectivity in Rural Ireland
 - Rural public transport (creation of a Rural Uber)
 - LocalLink, bus services;
 - Interconnectivity between services
 - Rural roads
- Opportunities for Investment in Heavy Rail
 - Heavy Rail links with ports¹ and airports²;
 - Commuter and Intercity rail services;
 - Line speeds, line capacity, and signalling on rural railway lines³;
 - Protection of closed and abandoned railway lines;
 - Whether EU funding is available for heavy rail investment, including for “Ten-T Intermodal Nodes”.
- Rural Transport Fares
 - Examine and fares and subsidies for rural transport to see if it is equitable with urban areas

¹ Dublin port (North quays) and Waterford port have rail connections. Other ports do not, however Foynes is a possible project as the railway line from Limerick to Foynes is closed, but not abandoned. Rosslare Europort has a disused rail connection, while the Rosslare Europort – Dublin line is open, the Rosslare Strand – Waterford railway line is disused at present. Cork port does not have a rail facility.

² The Committee understands (according to Irish Rail estimates quoted in National Transport Authority publications) that the estimated costs and benefits of the proposed Dublin Airport Heavy rail project (a 7.5km rail spur from Clongriffin on the Dublin – Belfast railway line) are as follows:

- (a) Cost €200M;
- (b) NPV (Net Present Value) of €1 billion (of benefits);
- (c) IRR (Internal Rate of Return) of 24%.

The Committee also understands that a study was carried out by Clare County Council on the proposed Limerick to Shannon Airport railway.

³ This includes the following railway lines:

- Limerick – Ballybrophy;
- Limerick Junction – Waterford;
- Ballina - Manulla Junction.

- Western Rail Corridor
 - Flooding at Ballycar on the Galway – Limerick Railway Phase 1: Flooding⁴ at Ballycar⁵ on the Galway to Limerick railway line is causing regular line closures, with increasing frequency. It appears that no flood mitigation measures are planned.
 - Restoration of the Athenry – Tuam – Claremorris Railway Phase 2: Independent costings and review of the restoration of the Athenry – Tuam - Claremorris railway line⁶. This may include the restoration of the double track from Galway to Oranmore, and possible extension of the double track to Athenry.
 - Protection of the Claremorris – Collooney (Sligo) Railway Phase 3: Protection of the Claremorris to Collooney (Sligo) closed railway line⁷ to enable future restoration of the railway line.
 - Planning the Collooney (Sligo) – Derry Railway Phase 4: Planning the Collooney – Derry railway line.
- Community Banking
 - The Committee will consider the commitments in the Programme for a Partnership Government in relation to Community Banking.

“We will also advance a new model of ‘community banking’ by requesting An Post and the League of Credit Unions, as well as any other interested stakeholders, to investigate and propose a new model of community banking that provides a suite of banking services through the large network of Post Offices. This could be based on the Kiwibank model in New Zealand, where the Post Office owned bank provides a comprehensive suite of financial services, from personal loans and bank accounts to credit cards, business banking, and insurance...”

“We will thoroughly investigate the German Sparkassen model for the development of local public banks that operate within well-defined regions.”⁸

⁴ There are four types of flooding in Ireland:

- pluvial (rain);
- fluvial (river);
- coastal;
- groundwater.

Groundwater flooding is the least understood type of flooding, and little or no research has been carried out on groundwater flooding, including the effect of climate change, until recently. The Office of Public Works is the lead agency for all flooding types, except groundwater. The Geological Survey is investigating groundwater flooding in counties Clare, Galway, Longford, Mayo, and Roscommon at present.

⁵ Near Newmarket on Fergus, County Clare.

⁶ [Programme for a Partnership Government](https://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme%20for%20Partnership%20Government.pdf)
[https://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme for Partnership Government.pdf](https://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/ImageLibrary/Programme%20for%20Partnership%20Government.pdf)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

- The Committee will also consider the report of the Department of Finance and the Department of Rural and Community Development on Local Public Banking.⁹
- Broadband and Phone Coverage (including the roll-out of 5G technology)
 - The roll-out of high-speed broadband
- Regional Rural Cohesion Funding and the Effects of Brexit
 - Impact of Brexit on INTERREG Funding
 - Impact of Brexit on current INTERREG projects between Ireland and Wales¹⁰
 - Potential future partnerships with EU countries for INTERREG projects
- Preventing Rural Crime
 - Development of a community text alert in the fight against crime and rural isolation; investigate and develop a house alarm grant for the most vulnerable
- Leader Funding – Review of application process
 - LEADER (*Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*)
- Support for Local Small Businesses in Rural Ireland and Sustainability
 - Main Street rejuvenation in rural towns and villages
 - Supporting main street retail and businesses in rural towns and villages
 - Examine six towns involved in pilot projects to encourage town centre living¹¹
 - How small villages with populations of under 500 people, have very little opportunities for rural development programmes and if such programmes could be considered for villages with population of up to 200 and 200-500 people;
- Local Development Companies
 - Community-led local development and Smart villages.
- Issues relating to Water and Sewerage
 - Private Waste Water Treatment Plants and Planning Permission policy for one-off builds.
 - Provision of water and waste water to rural areas and state contribution to same.
- RAPID Programme
 - (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) [Review of Communities Facilities Scheme and RAPID](#)
- Climate Change
 - Measurement of Carbon emissions in Rural Ireland
 - Benefits of Trees and hedgerows on farms (including agroforestry) and in rural Ireland, and native woodlands, including as carbon sinks,

⁹ [Local Public Banking in Ireland](https://www.finance.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Joint-Report-on-Local-Public-Banking.pdf), Department of Finance and the Department of Rural and Community, 4 July 2018, Development, <https://www.finance.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Joint-Report-on-Local-Public-Banking.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.irelandwales.eu/what-is-the-programme>

¹¹ <https://drcd.gov.ie/about/news-centre/press-releases/six-rural-towns-to-develop-innovative-proposals-to-encourage-town-centre-living/>

- Flood risk mitigation, and various schemes under the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- Opportunities for New UNESCO Global Geoparks in Ireland
 - There is a worldwide network of 140 UNESCO Global Geoparks. The [European Geoparks](#)¹² Network comprises 71 UNESCO Global Geoparks from 23 European Countries. At present, there are three UNESCO Global Geoparks in Ireland¹³.
 - The Committee will consider the prospects of several other interested areas¹⁴ in Ireland which are interested in applying for UNESCO Global Geopark status.
 - The Geological Survey¹⁵ provided information on existing UNESCO Geoparks¹⁶ and other interested areas.

The Islands:

- Housing needs analysis for people living on the islands
- Developing the Fishing Industry (fishing rights, access to resources (piers etc)
- Examine the critical service and infrastructure deficits on the islands

¹² <http://www.europeangeoparks.org/>

¹³ UNESCO Global Geoparks in Ireland:

- [The Copper Coast](#) (2001) in County Waterford; <https://coppercoastgeopark.com/>
- [The Burren and Cliffs of Moher](#) (2011) in County Clare; <http://www.burrengeopark.ie/>
- [the Marble Arch Caves](#) (2001), the world's first cross-border Geopark (Fermanagh and Cavan). <https://www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com/>

¹⁴ UNESCO World Geoparks - interested sites in Ireland (*Source: Geological Survey of Ireland*):

- [Joyce Country and the Western Lakes](#) (Galway / Mayo);
- [Mourne Cooley Gullion](#) (2007 -) (Down, Louth and Armagh);
- Causeway Coast & Glens of Antrim (2012 -);
- South Kerry (2004 -);
- Allihies (County Cork);
- [Wicklow](#);
- [Sligo](#);
- Offaly-Westmeath Eskers.

¹⁵ <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie>

¹⁶ [UNESCO Geoparks](#) *Celebrating Earth Heritage, Sustaining Local Communities* "UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. Their bottom-up approach of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities has become increasingly popular." – Geological Survey

- Energy Self-sufficiency (including through EU funding)
- Waste Management on the islands

C. Pre-Legislative Scrutiny/Post-enactment

In addition to this core work, the Joint Committee is also empowered to consider the examination of the general scheme or draft heads of Bills and to consider any post-enactment report on any Bill enacted in the previous 12 months by the Houses of the Oireachtas in respect of the Department. Pre-Committee Stage scrutiny under Dáil Standing Order 148B, shall be conducted from a policy, legal and financial perspective, and in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the Dáil and the Government and laid before Dáil Éireann.

D. Engagement with Chairperson designates

The Joint Committee is also empowered to engage with the Chairpersons designate of a body or agency under the aegis of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, prior to their nomination for appointment, to discuss their strategic priorities for the role.

This Work Programme of the Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development, and the Islands was agreed by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2020. In accordance with Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann, it was agreed that the Work Programme be laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas.

Denis Naughten T.D.
4 November 2020

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee

a) Scope and Context of Activities of Committees (derived from Standing Orders - 050 84, 550 70)

- 1) The Joint Committee may only consider such matters, engage in such activities, exercise such powers and discharge such functions as are specifically authorised under its orders of reference and under Standing Orders;
- 2) Such matters, activities, powers and functions shall be relevant to, and shall arise only in the context of, the preparation of a report to the Dáil/and or Seanad;
- 3) The Joint Committee shall not consider any matter which is being considered, or of which notice has been given of a proposal to consider, by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to Standing Order 186 and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993;
- 4) The Joint Committee shall not consider any matter which is being considered, or of which notice has been given of a proposal to consider, by the Joint Committee on Public Petitions in the exercise of its functions under Standing Order 111A; and

The Joint Committee shall refrain from inquiring into in public session or publishing confidential information regarding any matter if so requested, for stated reasons given in writing, by-

- (i) a member of the Government or a Minister of State, or
- (ii) the principal office-holder of a body under the aegis of a Department or which is partly or wholly funded by the State or established or appointed by a member of the Government or by the Oireachtas:

Provided that the Chairman may appeal any such request made to the Ceann Comhairle, whose decision shall be final.

- 5) It shall be an instruction to all Select Committees to which Bills are referred that they shall ensure that not more than two Select Committees shall meet to consider a Bill on any given day, unless the Dáil, after due notice given by the Chairman of the Select Committee, waives this instruction on motion made by the Taoiseach pursuant to Standing Order 28. The Chairmen of Select Committees shall have responsibility for compliance with this instruction.

b) Functions of Departmental Committees (derived from Standing Orders - D50 84A and 550 70A}

(1) The Select Committee shall consider and report to the Dáil on-

- (a) such aspects of the expenditure, administration and policy of a Government Department or Departments and associated public bodies as the Committee may select, and
- (b) European Union matters within the remit of the relevant Department or Departments.

(2) The Select Committee may be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Eireann for the purposes of the functions set out in this Standing Order, other than at paragraph (3), and to report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Select Committee shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments, such-

- (a) Bills,
- (b) proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 187,
- (c) Estimates for Public Services, and
- (d) other matters

as shall be referred to the Select Committee by the Dáil, and

- (e) Annual Output Statements including performance, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public moneys, and
- (f) such Value for Money and Policy Reviews as the Select Committee may select.

(4) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Joint Committee may consider the following matters in respect of the relevant Department or Departments and associated public bodies:

- (a) matters of policy and governance for which the Minister is officially responsible,
- (b) public affairs administered by the Department,
- (c) policy issues arising from Value for Money and Policy Reviews conducted or commissioned by the Department,
- (d) Government policy and governance in respect of bodies under the aegis of the Department,
- (e) policy and governance issues concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by a member of the Government or the Oireachtas,
- (f) the general scheme or draft heads of any Bill,
- (g) any post-enactment report laid before either House or both Houses by a member of the Government or Minister of State on any Bill enacted by the Houses of the Oireachtas,
- (h) statutory instruments, including those laid or laid in draft before either House or both Houses and those made under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009,
- (i) strategy statements laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas pursuant to the Public Service Management Act 1997,

- U) annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law, and laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, of the Department or bodies referred to in subparagraphs (d) and (e) and the overall performance and operational results, statements of strategy and corporate plans of such bodies, and
- (k) such other matters as may be referred to it by the Dáil from time to time.

(5) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Joint Committee shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments-

- (a) EU draft legislative acts standing referred to the Select Committee under Standing Order 114, including the compliance of such acts with the principle of subsidiarity,
- (b) other proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues, including programmes and guidelines prepared by the European Commission as a basis of possible legislative action,
- (c) non-legislative documents published by any EU institution in relation to EU policy matters, and
- (d) matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the relevant EU Council of Ministers and the outcome of such meetings.

(6) Where the Select Committee has been joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann, the Chairman of the Dáil Select Committee shall also be the Chairman of the Joint Committee.

(7) The following may attend meetings of the Select or Joint Committee, for the purposes of the functions set out in paragraph (5) and may take part in proceedings without having a right to vote or to *move* motions and amendments:

- (a) members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland, including Northern Ireland,
- (b) members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and
- (c) at the invitation of the Committee, other members of the European Parliament.

(8) The Joint Committee may, in respect of any Ombudsman charged with oversight of public services within the policy remit of the relevant Department or Departments, consider-

- (a) such motions relating to the appointment of an Ombudsman as may be referred to the Committee, and
- (b) such Ombudsman reports laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas as the Committee may select.

c) Powers of Committees {derived from Standing Orders - DSO 85, 114 and 116 and SSO 71, 107 and 109}

The Joint Committee has:-

(1) power to take oral and written evidence and to print and publish from time to time minutes of such evidence taken in public before the Select Committee together with such related documents as the Select Committee thinks fit;

{2} power to invite and accept oral presentations and written submissions from interested persons or bodies;

{3} power to appoint sub-Committees and to refer to such sub-Committees any matter comprehended by its orders of reference and to delegate any of its powers to such sub-Committees, including power to report directly to the Dáil;

{4} power to draft recommendations for legislative change and for new legislation;

(4A) power to examine any statutory instrument, including those laid or laid in draft before either House or both Houses and those made under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009, and to recommend, where it considers that such action is warranted, whether the instrument should be annulled or amended;

(4B) for the purposes of paragraph {4A), power to require any Government Department or instrument-making authority concerned to submit a Memorandum to the Select Committee explaining any statutory instrument under consideration or to attend a meeting of the Select Committee for the purpose of explaining any such statutory instrument: Provided that such Department or authority may decline to attend for stated reasons given in writing to the Select Committee, which may report thereon to the Dáil;

(5) power to require that a member of the Government or Minister of State shall attend before the Select Committee to discuss policy for which he or she is officially responsible: Provided that a member of the Government or Minister of State may decline to attend for stated reasons given in writing to the Select Committee, which may report thereon to the Dáil: and provided further that a member of the Government or Minister of State may request to attend a meeting of the Select Committee to enable him or her to discuss such policy;

(6) power to require that a member of the Government or Minister of State shall attend before the Select Committee to discuss proposed primary or secondary legislation {prior to such legislation being published) for which he or she is officially responsible: Provided that a member of the Government or Minister of State may decline to attend for stated reasons given in writing to the Select Committee, which may report thereon to the Dáil: and provided further that a member of the Government or Minister of State may request to attend a meeting of the Select Committee to enable him or her to discuss such proposed legislation;

(6A) power to require that a member of the Government or Minister of State shall attend before the Select Committee and provide, in private session if so requested by the member of the Government or Minister of State, oral briefings in advance of meetings of the relevant EU Council of Ministers to enable the Select Committee to make known its views: Provided that the Committee may also require such attendance following such meetings;

(6B) power to require that the Chairperson designate of a body or agency under the aegis of a Department shall, prior to his or her appointment, attend before the Select Committee to discuss his or her strategic priorities for the role;

(6C) power to require that a member of the Government or Minister of State who is officially responsible for the implementation of an Act shall attend before a Select Committee in relation to the consideration of a report under Standing Order 164A;

(7) subject to any constraints otherwise prescribed by law, power to require that principal office-holders in bodies in the State which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by members of the Government or by the Oireachtas shall attend meetings of the Select Committee, as appropriate, to discuss issues for which they are officially responsible: Provided that such an office-holder may decline to attend for stated reasons given in writing to the Select Committee, which may report thereon to the Dáil;

(8) power to engage, subject to the consent of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission, the services of persons with specialist or technical knowledge, to assist it or any of its sub-Committees in considering particular matters; and

(9) power to undertake travel, subject to-

(a) such recommendations as may be made by the Working Group of Committee Chairmen under DSO 108(2)(a) and 550 104(2); and

(b) the consent of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission, and normal accounting procedures.

In accordance with Articles 6 and 8 of Protocol No. 2 to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (*Protocol on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality*) as applied by sections 7(3) and 7(4) of the European Union Act 2009, the Joint Committee has the power to

consider whether any act of an institution of the European Union infringes the principle of subsidiarity;

form a reasoned opinion that a draft legislative act (within the meaning of Article 3 of the said Protocol) does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity.

Appendix 2: Agencies under the aegis of the Department of Social Protection

The Citizens Information Board

The [Citizens Information Board](#) (CIB) is responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy relating to social services and entitlements.

All appointments are made by the Minister and the legislative provisions governing board membership of the CIB are contained in the Comhairle Act 2000 and the Citizens Information Act 2007. The legislation provides that:

- The Board shall consist of fifteen members;
- One member of the Board shall be designated as chairperson;
- The period of membership shall not exceed five years;
- The members of the Board shall include one officer of the Minister, three members representative of people with disabilities and one member of the staff of the Board;
- Not less than six members of the Board shall be female and not less than six shall be male.

The legislation also provides that a member of the Board whose period of membership expires by the effluxion of time (passing of five-year term) shall be eligible for re-appointment as a member of the Board.

The Pensions Authority (Formerly Pensions Board)

The Pensions Authority is a regulatory body operating under the aegis of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the statutory role of the Authority is to monitor and supervise the operation of the Pensions Act 1990.

Oversight of the Pensions Authority is provided by a three-person board. This consists of the following:

- Ms Jane Williams as Authority chair
- Ms Anne Vaughan, Deputy Secretary in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, who represents the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- Ms Ann Nolan, Second Secretary in the Department of Finance, who represents the Minister for Finance.

The role CEO of the Pensions Board is now renamed the Pensions Regulator, with Mr Brendan Kennedy continuing in that role.

These changes took effect 6th March 2014.

Social Welfare Tribunal

The Social Welfare Tribunal is a statutory body set up in 1982 to deal with cases where entitlement to Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Assistance is refused due to an involvement in a trade dispute.

The legislation governing the operation of the Social Welfare Tribunal is provided for in Sections 331 to 333 of the Social Welfare (Consolidation) Act, 2005.

The Tribunal consists of a Chairman and four ordinary members, two nominated by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and two nominated by an organisation representative of employers. All members are appointed by the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection for a term of three years.

[Current Board membership](#)

Social Welfare Appeals Office

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an independent agency established to provide an appeals service to persons who are unhappy with decisions of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection on questions relating to entitlement to social welfare payments and insurability of employment under the Social Welfare Acts.

The Office is headed by a Chief Appeals Officer and has its own Appeals Officers. You can contact the Social

Welfare Appeals Office at:

Social Welfare Appeals Office D'Olier House
D'Olier Street Dublin 2

www.socialwelfareappeals.ie

Telephone: (01) 6732800

Locall 1890 74 74 34

If calling from outside the Republic of Ireland please call +353 1 6732800

The Pensions Council

The Pensions Council was established to provide pension policy advice to the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Its membership ensures that the relevant skills, knowledge and experience is available to provide the necessary advice and information in the development of pensions policy.

If you wish to contact the Pensions Council you can email info@pensionscouncil.ie.

Appendix 4: Agencies under the aegis of the Department of Rural and Community Development

Charities Regulator

"The Charities Regulator is Ireland's national statutory regulator for charitable organisations. The Charities Regulator is an independent authority and was established in October 2014 under the Charities Act 2009.

The key functions of the Regulator are to establish and maintain a public register of charitable organisations operating in Ireland and ensure their compliance with the Charities Acts.

The Regulator also engages in the provision of services to charities including the authorising of appointments of new charitable trustees, the framing of schemes of incorporation, authorisation of Cy-près schemes and disposition of lands held upon charitable trusts."

Accountability of Chief Executive (of the Charities Regulator¹⁷) to the Committee (Charities Act 2009 (Revised))

23.—

- 1) In this section "Committee" means a Committee appointed by either House of the Oireachtas or jointly by both Houses of the Oireachtas (other than the Committee referred to in section 22 or the Committee on Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann or the Committee on Members' Interests of Seanad Éireann) or a subcommittee of such a Committee.
- 2) Subject to subsection (3), the chief executive shall, at the request in writing of a Committee, attend before it to give account for the general administration of the Authority.
- 3) The chief executive shall not be required to give account before a Committee for any matter which is or has been or may at a future time be the subject of proceedings before a court or Tribunal in the State.
- 4) Where the chief executive is of the opinion that a matter in respect of which he or she is requested to give an account before a Committee is a matter to which subsection (3) applies, he or she shall inform the Committee of that opinion and the reasons for

¹⁷ Formally the Charities Regulatory Authority.

the opinion and, unless the information is conveyed to the Committee at a time when the chief executive is before it, the information shall be so conveyed in writing.

- 5) Where the chief executive has informed a Committee of his or her opinion in accordance with subsection (4) and the Committee does not withdraw the request referred to in subsection (2) in so far as it relates to a matter the subject of that opinion —
 - a) the chief executive may, not later than 21 days after being informed by the Committee of its decision not to do so, apply to the High Court in a summary manner for determination of the question whether the matter is one to which subsection (3) applies, or
 - b) the Chairperson of the Committee may, on behalf of the Committee, make such an application,and the High Court shall determine the matter.
- 6) Pending the determination of an application under subsection (5), the chief executive shall not attend before the Committee to give account for the matter the subject of the application.
- 7) If the High Court determines that the matter concerned is one to which subsection (3) applies, the Committee shall withdraw the request referred to in subsection (2), but if the High Court determines that subsection (3) does not apply, the chief executive shall attend before the Committee to give account for the matter.
- 8) In the performance of his or her duties under this section, the chief executive shall not question or express an opinion on the merits of any policy of the Government or a Minister of the Government or on the merits of the objectives of such a policy.

Irish Water Safety

“The statutory, voluntary body and registered charity established to promote water safety and reduce drownings in Ireland.

Our focus is on Public Awareness and Education. Tragically, an average of 133 people drown in Ireland each year, eleven every month. We strive to reduce these fatalities by increasing water safety awareness and by changing attitudes and behaviours so that our aquatic environments can be enjoyed with confidence and safety.”

POBAL

“Pobal is a not-for-profit company that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU.

We are an intermediary that works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality. We do this by managing funding and providing resources for suitable programmes. In 2016, we provided management and support services to circa 24 programmes for four different Government departments and EU bodies.”

Western Development Commission

“The Western Development Commission is a state body set up to develop the Western Region by:

Ensuring that government policy is directed at improving the social and economic situation in the Western Region from Donegal to Clare.

Developing projects on a regional basis in sectors such as tourism, industry, marine, renewable energy, technology and organic agri-food.

Operating a €32 million Western Investment Fund that provides loans and equity to business and local communities in the Western Region. This Fund operates on a commercial basis and aims to become revolving, re-investing monies back into the Region.”

ⁱ [National Planning Framework 2040](#) is currently under discussion