



**OPW**



Office of Public Works  
**Statement of Strategy**

2021—2024



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Statement of Strategy 2021–2024



**OPW**



# 1

## Minister's Foreword

**The Office of Public Works** (OPW) is a key service provider to the Government managing the Government's estate portfolio, maintaining and presenting Ireland's built heritage and managing Ireland's flood risk. The breadth of its role and expertise is reflected in the Programme for Government, Our Shared Future. This contains numerous commitments that can only be successfully implemented through the OPW continuing to collaborate closely with our client organisations and customers. Central to meeting these commitments over the coming three years is delivering the objectives set out in this Statement of Strategy.

Since its establishment in 1831, generations have enjoyed and benefitted from the OPW's specialist work on state buildings, heritage sites, flood relief measures and at our national parks and gardens. In this time, managing our diverse capital projects was underpinned by a commitment to meet our responsibility to our natural environment. Our future success will be measured by continuing to deliver harmony between our built and natural environments, including how we respond to new challenges such as climate change.

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The new Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre provides an immersive visitor experience with state-of-the-art exhibitions that illuminate the history and showcase the unique archaeological complexes at this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

It is timely and appropriate to set this as an indicator for our future success and to state this as a new vision for the OPW, *our built and natural environments in harmony*. This Statement of Strategy is the first of a number of Strategies that will focus our work to continually realise this vision and will be implemented across four themes:

**Theme: Our Clients**

*Strengthening our Outward Facing Service.*

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**Theme: Sustainability**

*Embedding Sustainability in our Decisions.*

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**Theme: Climate Action**

*Mitigating and Adapting to the impact of Climate Change.*

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**Theme: People and Processes**

*Enhancing our Organisational Capability.*

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Strategically framing our work across four themes helps us to continue to efficiently provide public services, realise our vision, address the new challenges and deliver on the Government's commitments. Notwithstanding the disparate roles and specialisms within the OPW, adopting this theme based approach will strengthen the collaborative approach within the OPW and with our client organisations and customers.

The OPW staff are committed to delivering the Strategy's ambitions. Since being appointed as Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works in June 2020, I have been impressed by the Office's commitment, capacity, flexibility and responsiveness to delivering the highest level of public services, including responding to the challenge of Brexit and throughout the national response to the Covid 19 pandemic. These demonstrate the commitment by the OPW staff to adopting new approaches to service delivery and quickly responding to new challenges. We are living in difficult times and I am confident the OPW's organisational capability and culture will continue to deliver the highest level of public services and achieve the objectives set out in this Statement of Strategy.



Patrick O'Donovan, TD

*Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works*

# 2

## Chairman's Statement

This Office of Public Works Statement of Strategy 2021–2024 is submitted to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform under Section 5(1) of the Public Service Management Act, 1997. It outlines a clear and ambitious path for the OPW to take for the next three years. We will continue to deliver high standards of public service, make progress to embed new initiatives and strategies that are underway and to reform our delivery systems to meet the strategy's ambitions and objectives.

The publication of a new Programme for Government, Our Shared Future, makes it timely for the OPW to set fresh, clear objectives to meet Government commitments. The objectives set out in this Strategy means we will continue to fulfil and achieve the full potential of the OPW's important role to Ireland's economy, society, culture, heritage and environment.

The Statement of Strategy has been developed through a strong partnership approach. Significant staff engagement during its development allowed us to embrace the opportunity to self-assess and analyse our role and set an ambitious course for our future direction that will meet the emerging challenges. I want to thank and pay tribute to staff across the organisation for their active, constructive and valuable input. This engagement has built a momentum that I am confident will ensure, that together, we will achieve our shared ambitions and objectives.

Part of this staff engagement process gave us the space to reflect on our organisational values. These values define how we continue to improve how we work together and with our client organisations, customers, cross border and international partners. The cross

discipline capability of the organisation will continue to be one of our key strengths. Aligning our objectives, not by functional area but by strategic theme allows the OPW demonstrate its significant role and contribution to meeting Government commitments and national priorities.

I wish also to acknowledge all of the contributions we received from our stakeholders during the development process. Over the course of the next three years working with our clients organisations and customers we can deliver services that continue to meet their needs and the needs of society.

During the current Strategy 2017–2020, the OPW has delivered on significant objectives while also strengthening its organisation and processes. The evidence from the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme secured €1bn investment to protect 95% of properties assessed to be at flood risk over the coming decade. The Estate side has been re-organised into a Planning function and distinct Delivery units matched to different market sectors. The delivery of Brexit infrastructure demonstrated our agile response. The upgrades to a wide range of our Heritage sites, parks and gardens provided significant societal and environmental benefits. These are just some examples of how the OPW can provide responsive and evidence based professional solutions for Government.

Our new Statement of Strategy, builds on our successes and strengths and sets out our vision, mission, values and goals. These are the foundations of the Three Year Business Plans that will detail our objectives and high level work programmes for the next three years. The development of the Three Year Business Plans will allow us to consider the best timing for change, so that we can embed what we are doing, and pace the introduction of new initiatives.

We have a solid base to work from and although we have a lot more to do, I am very excited and motivated about the positive impact the OPW will have in the years to come, as heretofore, as we work with all of our client organisations, customers and stakeholders in delivering the objectives and ambitions contained in this Strategy.



*Maurice Buckley*

Maurice Buckley  
Executive Chairman, Office of Public Works

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The OPW has a legacy of involvement in the design and delivery of the Irish Pavilion at the World Expo. The design for Expo 2021 in Dubai is inspired by the megalithic Newgrange lightbox. The pavilion holds a 360° exhibition and a performance space where the best of Irish ingenuity, imagination and innovation will be showcased.







# 3

## Introduction

This is the Statement of Strategy for the Office of Public Works (OPW) for the period 2021–2024. It sets out our vision, mission, our purpose and our values. It describes the current environment in which our specialist and public services are to be delivered. It identifies a number of underlying themes that will inform our work over the three-year period and is the foundation for our Three Year Business Plans that will outline the actions we will take, to achieve our four strategic objectives.

A SWOT and PESTLE analysis of both the internal and external factors likely to impact on the OPW in the coming years have informed this Strategy. So too has an extensive internal and external consultation process, including with staff, State Agencies, Government Departments and Offices.

This Strategy builds on and seeks to ensure continuity with previous Statements of Strategy. It takes account of the Programme for Government, Our Shared Future and also reflects the broader Government strategies such as Our Public Service 2020, Climate Action Plan 2019, Heritage Ireland 2030 and Project Ireland 2040.

The Strategy provides a framework for how we can continue working with our client organisations and customers focusing on their needs; the evidence; priority outcomes; and being responsible and accountable. We have set the development of our own staff and our own capability as a distinct strategic objective to reflect the priority we attach to supporting staff initiatives, their learning along with personal and career development.

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Originally established as a Royal Deer Park in 1662, the Phoenix Park is rich in biodiversity and an important natural resource for the citizens of Dublin. Approximately 600 deer still roam freely throughout the Phoenix Park, the largest enclosed public park in any capital city in Europe.

→ *Overleaf*

The OPW's flood relief capital works programme represents an investment of close to €1 billion and is a critical element of the Government's climate strategy and adaptation plan.



## 4

# Mission, Purpose and Vision Statements

Our role in the Estate Management, Heritage Services and Flood Risk Management areas, requires a strong sense of identity and direction. While we must often respond quickly and flexibly to the challenges of the day in carrying out the mission assigned to us in legislation and the Programme for Government, it is important that we are conscious of the core purpose of the organisation and why it is essential as part of the apparatus of Government. We must also have a vision of how we impact and contribute to the country we live in.



## Mission

*To manage the State property portfolio, Ireland's flood risk, and our national heritage – all in a sustainable manner*



## Purpose

*To provide the Government and the public with versatile, innovative and specialist services*



## Vision: **Towards 200 Years**

*Our built and natural environments in harmony*



## Mission

*To manage the State property portfolio, Ireland's flood risk, and our national heritage – all in a sustainable manner*

Our mission provides a summary description of the functions of the OPW in the areas of Estate Management, Built Heritage and Flood Risk Management. Whether we are developing and utilising the State property portfolio, managing and informing Ireland's flood risk or preserving and promoting our national heritage, our mission communicates a sense of our identity to our customers, staff and to the general public. It highlights our main areas of operation and influences every decision we make as an organisation.



## Purpose

*To provide the Government and the public with versatile, innovative and specialist services*

The OPW's key strength is its people, with an invaluable source of innovative and specialist skills across a wide variety of interrelated areas. Our core purpose is to provide the Government with a range of specialist services, including professional, management, technical, craftsmanship advice and expertise in response to its requirements for a variety of significant projects, State events, commitments and related policies. This invaluable resource allows Government to efficiently respond to an array of issues that arise which require specific professional interventions.



## Vision: Towards 200 Years

*Our built and natural environments in harmony*

As our Bicentennial anniversary approaches in 2031, we have invested time to articulate our overall vision of where we want to be. At the broadest level, we believe our contribution is to shape the evolution of our built and natural environments while maintaining harmony within themselves, with each other, with our history and within the society we live. This underpins our role in protecting and enhancing the built environment through our buildings and flood relief schemes, as well as our continued efforts in caring for Ireland's historic monuments, properties, parks and gardens. In continuing to do so, our vision inspires us as we strive to maintain the harmony and balance between our evolving environments through the work that we do. The long-term measure of our success will be the contribution we make to the social and economic life of this island nation.

# 5

## OPW Values

The OPW is driven by its values, which reflect our statutory role and our responsibilities. Developing this Statement of Strategy was an opportunity to review and, in part, restate our core values. We engaged in a comprehensive consultation with our staff to reflect on and redefine our values, so that they remain relevant to our current and future work programmes.

The OPW shares with the wider Civil Service:

- A strong public service ethos of integrity, independence, impartiality, equality, fairness and respect,
- A culture of accountability, efficiency and value for money, and
- A commitment to the highest standards of leadership, professionalism and rigour.

Specifically, in relation to performing and meeting our functions and responsibilities, the OPW adopts the following overarching values:



## Expertise

All OPW staff strive to become expert at their work and we continuously grow our expertise.



## Respect

We are considerate in our behaviour towards people. The OPW advocates FREDIE: fairness, respect, equality, diversity, inclusion and engagement.



## Excellence

We each take pride in our work, aiming for high levels of effectiveness and client satisfaction with quality, timely results.



## Collaboration

We develop partnerships and teams based on honesty and openness. We embrace different perspectives and build consensus.



## Sustainability

The work we do is built to last. We act for climate resilience. We pledge to future generations a continued legacy of the resources we safeguard along with the accrued knowledge and wisdom to protect them.

The culture of the OPW is shaped by our values. The values expressed in this Statement will be embedded in our activities and behaviour throughout the lifetime of this Corporate Strategy.





# Operating Environment – Opportunities and Challenges

The OPW operates in a highly complex environment, providing a leadership role for a very diverse and broad range of specialist public services with a multiplicity of stakeholders, client organisations and customers. Over the next three years this environment will be shaped by a number of factors including:

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**Economic Consequences of Covid-19 and Brexit** The last number of years have seen a sustained return of economic growth. Ireland is uniquely exposed to Brexit due to a very high trade intensity with the UK. The different types of EU-UK trade scenarios being considered could affect Ireland's trade with the UK and other trading partners. Budget 2021 was framed on the basis of no bilateral trade deal between the EU and the UK reducing Irish expected growth in 2021 to 1.75%.

Due to responding to the Covid 19 pandemic, the budgetary landscape has transformed dramatically in the space of a few months and remains uncertain. The level of economic activity of last year is not expected to return until at least 2022.

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**Political** The Programme for Government, Our Shared Future sets out an ambitious programme of commitments for all elements of the OPW's role.

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**Our Public Service 2020** This framework for development and innovation in Ireland's public service is enabling the building of capacity and improving the performance of the Civil Service and its staff. Strong governance will be key to successfully implementing the actions in Our Public Service 2020 and subsequent plans. It was preceded by two public service reform programmes, beginning in 2011. These plans have embedded a range of new approaches to governance, people management and service delivery, and have made the work of the public service more transparent, decision making more accountable, and service delivery more effective.

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**Collaboration with other Departments, Public Sector Bodies and the Public**

Continuing to develop strong working relationships with Government Departments, Local Authorities, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, representative bodies, the public and our cross border and international partners will be critical to achieving many of the OPW's objectives.

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**National Risk Assessment**

The National Risk Assessment published by the Department of the Taoiseach identifies a number of national risks with implications for the OPW, including the effects of Brexit, climate change and extreme weather events and major pandemics. The OPW is a member of the Government Task Force for Emergency Management and its associated structures.

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**Heritage Ireland 2030**

This is to be Ireland's new national heritage plan. It will be a coherent, comprehensive and inspiring framework of values, principles, strategic priorities and actions to guide and inform the heritage sector over the next decade.

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**Project Ireland 2040**

Project Ireland 2040 is an overarching long term strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of us and that can meet the requirements for population growth, of approximately one million people by 2040. Project Ireland 2040 sets out investments to provide for population growth in a compact, connected and sustainable way. The National Planning Framework sets the vision and strategy for the development of our country to 2040 and the National Development Plan 2018–2027 provides enabling investment to implement the strategy.

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**Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017–2021**

The Plan sets out actions through which a range of government, civil and private sectors will undertake to achieve Ireland's vision for biodiversity. The objectives lay out a clear framework for Ireland's national approach to biodiversity, ensuring that efforts and achievements of the past are built upon, while looking ahead to what can be achieved in the future. They include mainstreaming biodiversity across the decision making process in the State.

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**Climate Action Plan 2019**

Climate disruption is already having diverse and wide ranging impacts on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources. Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement on climate change require a transformational shift of our economies and societies towards climate resilient and sustainable development. The Climate Action Plan 2019 sets out an ambitious course of action over the coming years to address this issue.

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**Official Languages Act**

The OPW recognises its responsibility to facilitate people who wish to conduct their business with us through Irish. In that context, the OPW is guided by the Official Languages Act 2003.

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## Strategy Themes and Objectives

This Statement of Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the Public Service Management Act of 1997 and is focused on the work and activities of the OPW. Some of this work includes:

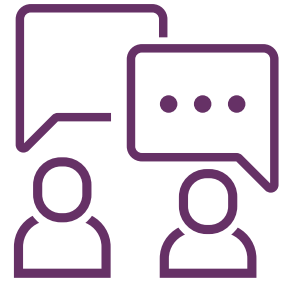
- Managing a significant part of the State’s property portfolio at 2,500 properties and providing accommodation for Government departments with over 700 Garda properties, approximately 550 offices and leading in the delivery of significant Brexit infrastructure projects,
- Maintaining and presenting Ireland’s most iconic heritage properties, including Ireland’s two World Heritage Sites, 800 National Monuments and over 2,000 acres of gardens and parklands. At a national and international level, we are showcasing the very best in what Ireland has to offer in terms of tourism, and
- Leading Ireland’s management of its flood risk, including delivering some 150 flood relief schemes under the National Development Plan 2018–2027 as part of Project Ireland 2040; and maintaining some 12,000 km of river channels and 800km of embankments.

Each of these functional areas has their own challenges and priorities. However, what unites the OPW is our staff who plan and organise our work collaboratively and collectively across these functions and across the broad range of our professional and unique disciplines and skills to meet the Government’s strategic priorities and commitments. That is why we have developed four themes to structure and govern the work of the OPW over the coming three years. In turn, we have identified four overarching objectives to act as a blueprint for the OPW to underpin our work in the coming years towards successfully achieving our vision *our built and natural environments in harmony*.

This Strategy is a bridge between the successes from our past Strategies and our priorities for the coming three years with a perspective covering at least the next decade.

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**Theme:**  
**Our Clients**  
*Strengthening our  
Outward Facing Service*



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**Theme:**  
**Sustainability**  
*Embedding Sustainability  
in our Decisions*



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**Theme:**  
**Climate Action**  
*Mitigating and Adapting  
to the Impact  
of Climate Change*



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**Theme:**  
**People and  
Processes**  
*Enhancing our  
Organisational Capability*







## Theme: Our Clients

### *Strengthening our Outward Facing Service*

The OPW does not operate alone. We recognise that although our functions differ to those of our key client organisations and customers, our respective roles and interests can be aligned as we work to improve the quality of public services in Ireland. In the coming three years, our objective is to further develop existing partnerships, strengthen our existing and create new collaborations, to ensure that we are optimising the delivery of our functions and reaching the potential of our role.

## Objective

***Further improve and sustain our strong ethos of customer service excellence through better collaboration, communication and enhanced delivery mechanisms.***

To achieve this objective, the OPW staff will continue to be empowered to ensure the needs of our client organisations and customers are central to informing their work and decisions. In doing so, we will establish a user-friendly access interface which will connect clients to the appropriate service areas, to provide timely and appropriate information and continually improve the client experience.

The OPW has a strong reputation for our expert knowledge and professional advice. As a centre of excellence, the OPW is an important resource for Government, State Agencies, academics and the public on expert, specialist and professional advice on architectural projects, estate management, historic properties, engineering services, flood risk management, art management, botanical, specialist crafts and skills to name just some. Our knowledge means we take decisions that are based on best evidence and support wider decisions across Government. We will endeavour to share our knowledge, our research and professional advice to a wide audience and provide practical and technical support to our clients and stakeholders. The continuous improvement of our skills, learning and experience of our staff will be maintained to support both our clients' experience and their continued trust in our advice, opinions and recommendations.

The OPW provides a variety of services across a wide range of our professional, administrative, technical and craft disciplines. We want to build our client engagement to inform more of what we do. This requires building our recognition to generate a greater understanding of the extent of services we can provide. Feedback from our clients, stakeholders and the public will provide information on their needs and external perceptions of the OPW as an organisation. This information will help us to improve performance and our external communications.

← [Previous page](#)

A premier scientific institution responsible for conserving and maintaining important collections of plant species and cultivars from all over the world, the National Botanic Gardens are operated and managed by the Office of Public Works.

1. Our client organisations including Government Departments, Local Authorities, and Public Sector regulatory and voluntary organisations; and our customers who are those people who work for our client organisations and members of the public.

The OPW in its role as provider of accommodation particularly recognises the importance of a well-functioning Accommodation Officers' network. Through the progressive strengthening of the relationship between Accommodation Officers with their OPW departmental Case Officers a finely tuned client demand management process can be fostered.

As a major stakeholder in the commercial property marketplace OPW recognises the need to work constructively with developers and landlords to ensure optimum results for OPW clients. While at all times operating fairly, the OPW will also act commercially to ensure best outcome for the taxpayer.

As a landowner, the OPW will continue to make strategic, long-term decisions to optimise its portfolio. As required, OPW will take all necessary steps to safeguard its property through securing of title, protecting against illegal activity and encroachment and, at all times working with tenants and occupants to ensure constructive, professional relationships.



## Theme: Sustainability

### *Embedding Sustainability in our Decisions*

Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is about ourselves, the degree to which together all sectors of society manage our resources and value our natural environment as we move forward as an economy and as a society. Sustainability is at the heart of the Government's policy commitments in the Programme for Government, Our Shared Future. This Strategy sets a strategic objective for the OPW to ensure that our approach to sustainability adequately addresses these policy commitments, the emerging environmental challenges and that the services we provide continue to contribute to Ireland's economic prosperity and the well-being of its citizens.

### Objective

***Ensure sustainability informs all of the OPW's decision making.***

Guided by the Sustainability Policy for the OPW, published in 2007, the OPW strives to deliver its mission in a sustainable manner. Through this policy, the OPW has developed many policy initiatives across the organisation and the public sector towards:

- reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emission,
- avoiding the generation of waste through life cycle thinking, reuse and recycling,
- adopting green procurement, where possible, and
- raising awareness of sustainability issues.

It is timely for the OPW to review its Sustainability Policy, so that its decisions continue to be informed by the latest evidence and policies and strike the right balance between economic, social and environmental needs.

Biodiversity plays a key role in the continuing ability of nature to provide ecosystems, necessary for human well-being such as clean water and air. While it is acknowledged that Ireland's biodiversity is declining, the OPW already operates at many levels to preserve Ireland's biodiversity, from devising national strategies, setting good practice standards, conducting public outreach and educational programmes, engagement with NGOs, through to a whole range of applied biodiversity enhancement initiatives intertwined with services nationally. Some examples include:

- Lead development of Ireland's National Strategy for Plant Conservation with a series of measures to strengthen conservation of indigenous plants,
- Development of national environmental guidance for river maintenance works, to further reduce potential environmental impacts and maximise ecological gain, and

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One of the great influences on Daniel O'Connell's life, Derrynane House is situated in a protected natural heritage area and is open to the public under the management of the Office of Public Works.







- Community outreach programmes like the Phoenix Park Biodiversity Festival and National Honey Show, to engage people, raise awareness and public education.

The OPW will continue to collaborate with key partners to deliver Ireland's National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017–2021.

Our estate management function will promote a longer-term vision for more innovative ways of working that are in line with the actions set out in the Programme for Government. These include significant reductions in carbon emissions, greater remote working, balanced regional development, and the promoting of nearly zero energy buildings. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic presents a global challenge to all office occupiers in considering what the office of the future will look like. It is likely that future offices may primarily be areas for meetings, project collaboration, training and social interaction through which organisational culture can be fostered and nurtured. OPW identifies the post pandemic era as one of transformation in the world of office accommodation. This new world is seen by OPW as a significant opportunity and one needs to be fully exploited. OPW's foremost objective will be to lead the conversation with clients in challenging prevailing norms, examining new ways of working, identifying alternative solutions to accommodation – both property and non-property and agreeing a future direction for the office portfolio. We will engage with Government and our clients with a view towards modernising the office portfolio, optimising space efficiency, realising assets value, supporting a sustainable environment and strengthening our data and research.

As part of the Strategy, we will strive to have an energy efficient accommodation portfolio, to support Ireland's Action Plan for Energy Efficiency in the Public Sector and will ensure that buildings in the OPW portfolio comply with all relevant building regulations and energy efficiency targets.

Well maintained, older buildings can be the very essence of sustainability, due to their embodied energy, the durability of materials and their tolerance of sympathetic alterations. We will further the delivery of planned and preventative building maintenance through the improvement of the quality of products and services as well as taking an integrated life cycle approach in the maintenance of our property and public buildings.

The OPW will continue to promote leading conservation practices for Heritage Properties and National Monuments to protect this rich historic fabric in a sustainable manner for future generations to enjoy. The OPW will actively contribute to the actions contained in Heritage Ireland 2030 and will continue to partner with Government Departments, semi-state organisations, local authorities and industry in implementing conservation principles in refurbishment and construction programmes.

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The Leinster House Conservation Project was recognised with an award by the RIAI in 2020. The project involved extensive historical research and specialist surveys of the plasterwork, paint, stonework, slate lead and copper, windows and doors. This work showcases the OPW's expertise in conserving our built heritage and safeguarding a state institution.

The OPW will continue to carefully manage heritage sites in a sustainable manner that will balance our remit to protect heritage assets with increased and more interactive access for visitors. We will ensure the adaptation and upgrading of facilities at existing historic properties is in line with best international conservation practice. We will strive to develop exemplar projects in adaptive and appropriate energy retrofitting techniques for historic buildings.

Over the coming decade the OPW plans to design and complete some 150 additional flood relief schemes. Assessment of the environmental impact of flood relief schemes forms part of the options for and the design of all flood relief schemes and is central to the planning and confirmation process. Where feasible, the OPW will continue to work with local authorities and other key statutory bodies to incorporate public realm opportunities into the design of flood relief schemes, to enhance the social value to protecting communities from flood risk.

The design of all flood relief schemes already assesses the scope for natural water retention measures to provide some degree of flood risk reduction, including in Clonakilty, the Wad and the Poddle. This proactive approach to soft engineering measures will be further guided by the research, 'SLOWWATERS', the OPW is co-funding with the Environment Protection Agency. The OPW will continue to work proactively with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with the delivery of the River Basin Management Plans.

The work of the Interdepartmental Flood Policy Co-ordination Group, chaired by the OPW, is the key structure through which the OPW promotes a whole of government sustainable approach to Ireland's management of flood risk. The 2009 Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management provide a transparent and robust framework for the consideration of flood risk in planning and development management and to minimise the location of future communities in areas at flood risk.

The establishment of the National Flood Forecasting Service by Met Éireann, and overseen by OPW, is key to support the development of a framework for community resilience, to assist individuals and communities to plan and respond to their flood risk; and inform any additional feasible measures to support these communities. The OPW through the Interdepartmental Flood Policy Co-ordination Group will continue to facilitate the development by other sectors of these and other new policy initiatives to help minimise the impact of flood damage to individuals and communities.

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The OPW played a central role in delivering the government's Brexit infrastructure project. The full range of OPW architectural, engineering, project & property management skills have been required to develop a total of eighteen sites across Dublin Port, Dublin Airport & Rosslare Harbour.







## Theme: Climate Action

### *Mitigating and Adapting to the Impact of Climate Change*

Climate change is already having a significant impact on our economy, society and environment and will continue to do so into the future. We are already experiencing the results of this through flooding, more extreme weather and rising sea levels. The Government is creating and implementing policies and strategies to achieve its long-term goal of transitioning to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. These are set out in the Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 and the OPW will prioritise its significant contribution to implementing its actions and achieving its targets.

## Objective

### ***Deliver clear plans and actions to contribute to implementing the Climate Action Plan 2019.***

Greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change are being addressed in parallel national plans – respectively through National Mitigation Plans and National Climate Change Adaptation Frameworks. The OPW will co-ordinate its response to both national plans to ensure we optimise our response and bring consistency to working with our partners.

On mitigation, the 2019 Climate Action Plan sets out 2030 targets for the Public Sector to:

- reduce CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions from the sector by 30%, and
- improve energy efficiency by 50%.

The OPW has maintained a long-standing tradition of building design based on energy efficiency, dating back to the 1996 publication *Green Design; Sustainable Building for Ireland*. Through our *Optimising Power @ Work* campaign, we focus on instigating behavioural change, the elimination of waste, the optimisation of existing controls and the upgrading of mechanical and electrical systems. By 2020, Departments have been able to achieve energy savings of approximately 25% by partnering with the OPW which has allowed us demonstrate leadership on energy efficiency for the whole of our economy and society. As we continue to promote this campaign over the coming three years, we will expand its focus to address not just the use of energy but also its source, by reducing, where possible the use of energy generated from fossil fuels.

Our response to climate action presents a number of opportunities in respect of the provision of new buildings and deep retrofit projects. We will enhance our current architectural and landscape design as well as the technical review system allowing us to inform our policies through to practice. Where possible we will embrace opportunities in anticipating future trends including the concept of embodied energy and lifecycle costs.

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Ireland's OPW-designed pavilion at Expo 2015 Milan on the theme of sustainability showcased our green credentials. For over 150 years the World Expo has helped humanity make sense of change and navigate through difficult times by promoting Education, Innovation and Cooperation.

On climate change adaptation, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has reported that for a 1.5°C rise in temperature, the global mean sea level could rise by up to approximately 1 metre by 2100. Projections of more intense Atlantic storms could potentially increase surge events and wave heights. Met Éireann has also projected that in Ireland, the autumns and winters may become wetter, with a possible increase in heavy precipitation events of approximately 30%.

These climate change projections indicate that flooding events are expected to become more frequent and severe in the future. This will have a considerable impact on flood risk in Ireland, particularly where our cities and most of our main towns are located either on the coast or alongside our estuaries or rivers. Launched in 2018, the OPW Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) are a roadmap for flood risk management measures that, in conjunction with flood risk schemes already constructed, will provide protection to approximately 95% of the properties assessed to be at significant flood risk. The design of flood relief schemes will include an assessment of adaptation requirements with a view to protecting many of the properties that would otherwise become prone to increased flooding from future climate change scenarios.

Building on the FRMPs, the OPW has published a Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management 2019–2024, in line with the requirements of the National Adaptation Framework and the Climate Action Plan 2019. The Sectoral Plan approved by Government in October 2019 includes twenty-one actions that will be implemented during this Strategy to meet the objectives of ongoing research and assessment, adapting our flood risk management practice across Government to effectively manage the potential impacts of climate change on future flood risk.

The OPW will assess the vulnerability to climate change of state-owned heritage assets, including National Monuments, National Historic Properties, public buildings, designed landscapes and gardens, and others. We will integrate climate action into all heritage management plans and policies. We will undertake disaster-risk management plans for state-owned historic buildings and collections, setting out measures to minimise the likelihood of an emergency and reduce the extent of damage and loss should it occur.

The impacts of climate change on our coast cut across many sectors and require planning now to prepare for the medium and longer term climate change impacts. The Government in 2019 established an Interdepartmental Group to develop a national co-ordinated and integrated coastal change strategy. It will set out the measures to be considered for managing the projected impact of coastal change to our coastal communities, economies, heritage, culture and environment. The OPW is jointly chairing the Interdepartmental Group with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and will submit options and recommendations to the Government for consideration.

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In May 2018 the OPW launched the Flood Risk Management Plans – the final output of the CFRAM. This is the largest study of flood risk ever undertaken by the State and assessed the risk in 300 communities around the country that are home to approximately 3 million citizens.









## Theme: People and Processes

### *Enhancing our Organisational Capability*

Our staff are the key to the OPW's success. Organisational capability describes the unique combination of skills, processes, technologies, and human abilities that enable our quality service delivery. We have supported our staff to develop their competencies and careers in line with our organisational need and that can benefit their personal development. Our staff actively embrace change to add efficiency to how we work. We are fully committed to the ongoing programme of change in the Civil and Public Service, including through Our Public Service 2020. Our processes, that guide how we work, place the OPW at the forefront of driving excellence in managing public investment and project delivery in a flexible and client-focussed manner and presenting Ireland's heritage. We will continue to strengthen our organisational capability to deliver in an ever changing environment with changing needs and expectations.

### Objective

***Strengthen our organisational capability through the effective development of our staff and optimised, innovative processes.***

There are many facets to the OPW that have evolved over the years to be the body charged by Government with resolving widely varied and often unrelated challenges and responsibilities in land, flood and building management. The breadth of its role can be appreciated in its stewardship of properties from the very ancient to the brand new, its role in flood protection, its expertise in State event organisation and many other activities. It is difficult to capture this breadth in a single succinct definition. The best way to describe the OPW might well be in terms of how it does its business rather than what it does. Through a combination of in house administrative, professional, technical and craft disciplines, supported by externally procured expertise, the OPW provides the best professional estate management service to Government and the country.

The OPW has one of the broadest aggregation of skill sets available to any organisation, public or private, in the State. It uses this broad base to support its ambition to be at the forefront of driving transformational change in the Civil Service. This ambition is commensurate with its role of steward and custodian of property and cultural State capital. The OPW aims to burnish its established track record and reputation through quality and timely delivery of its services.

Our strategic focus is to build on our organisational capability. We will work with managers and staff to create the optimal environment for staff to realise their potential, to shape and support their career and life ambitions and to make a difference every day through meaningful and stretching work. By attracting, developing and retaining the best people, we will shape the organisation with the right skills, to be the right size with the right costs and locations. We commit to growing internal talent, recruiting entry level talent, developing an

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The architectural team at the Office of Public Works relish the challenge of restoring living buildings and bringing Dublin's premier Georgian architecture, such as the Customs House, back to its original intended splendour.

apprenticeship framework and implementing succession planning to ensure tacit knowledge transfer and service consistency. Equality and engagement supports will remain central to employee relations within the OPW.

The relationship between effective leadership and strong performance is widely recognised in this strategy. Managers will be supported in their development as mentors and coaches through an ethos of lifelong learning. Collaboration, knowledge sharing, peer learning and post project reviews are core to our approach to our work and will continue to enable and promote capability development.

We will optimise those processes to achieve efficiencies, where possible, and foster an innovative mind-set that is driven by continuous improvement. We will examine the use of digital, technological and automation innovations in delivering services to our client organisations and customers, as well as ensuring that the best technology is available to allow staff to perform. We will further develop our organisational capability to support effective, innovative and emerging work practices. For example, the introduction of appropriate BIM deliverables into OPW procurement processes – both for design services, in the appointment of contractors and in the acquisition/leasing of State Property – has the potential to reduce direct building costs, mitigate construction risk and reduce potential contractual conflicts, providing improved outcomes on public works projects.

Accredited Management Systems (such as ISO 9001) will be enhanced and spread across the organisation to structure and streamline our documented processes in order to identify non-conformance and continuously improve quality and consistency. This will be underpinned by the development of an Innovation Strategy which will help identify new ways of thinking, emerging technologies and more effective processes to support operational effectiveness and efficiency. We will introduce improved case-tracking solutions with automated workflows and enhanced by Robotic Process Automation technology. Paper processes will continue to be reduced and data analytics along with reporting solutions will be enhanced to assist with planning and decision-making. As part of this, we will place a high value on data collection, maintenance and appropriate sharing. By further developing and enhancing our systems and processes, we can ensure compliance with our statutory and legislative responsibilities including in our occupational health, safety and welfare systems.

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State of the art audiovisuals and technological  
installations bring Ormond Castle's intriguing medieval  
history to life.





## 8

# Measuring and Monitoring Our Performance

Section 4 of the Public Service Management Act, 1997 requires the Chairman of the OPW to provide progress reports to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform on the implementation of the Strategy Statement annually or at such intervals as the Government may instruct from time to time. A Strategic Review is included in the Annual Report of the OPW which is submitted to the Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and is published on our website [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie).

Delivering on our objectives and measurement through related outcomes will be critical to the success of this Strategy. By measuring and monitoring our performance, we will ensure that the OPW is meeting the ambitions set out in this Strategy. Accordingly, the strategic thematic objectives set out in this strategy will feed into Three Year Business Plans.

The Three Year Business Plans allows us to set out the measures, actions and resources required, their priority and sequence; and the best timing for change, so that we can embed what we are doing, and pace the introduction of new initiatives. They will also set out the targets and indicators that we can use to measure our performance and achievements.

The Three Year Business Plans will inform the annual business planning processes. The annual Operational Plans will provide an opportunity to monitor and inform continued progress and for individual staff these annual plans inform Annual Role Profiles. Goals are reviewed six monthly as part of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) of the Office.

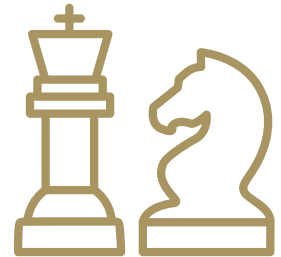
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As part of the 2019 National Biodiversity Conference the OPW committed to develop a National Seed Bank for conserving Irish flora in the National Botanic Gardens which is currently being set up to preserve our native seeds for future generations.

A Management Board Sub-group will be responsible for ensuring that each of the objectives under the four themes is monitored and measured at regular intervals. There will also be opportunities for regular stakeholder feedback to ensure objectives are being progressed.

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**1** | OPW  
Strategy



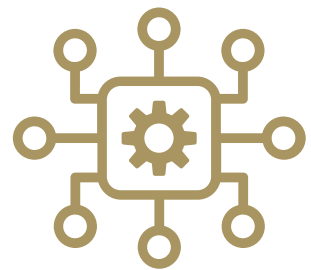
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**2** | Three Year  
Business  
Plans



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**3** | One Year  
Operational  
Plans



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**4** | PMDS  
Goal Setting







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The spectacular Winter Solstice at Newgrange was live-streamed by the OPW in 2020, with footage broadcast from within the Chamber. The unique Solstice Sunrise phenomenon was experienced 'virtually' around the world.





**OPW**