OPW
Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

Briefing for Minister

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The Office of Public Works – Minister's Brief

An Overview of the Office of Public Works (OPW)

1.1 Summary of Key Functions

An Act of Parliament in 1831 established the Commissioners of Public Works for the purpose of extending and promoting public works in Ireland.
Today the Office of Public Works (OPW) is a key service provider to the Government that:

- manages its estate portfolio;
- maintains and presents Ireland's built heritage; and
- manages Ireland's flood risk.

1.2 Staffing and Locations

The OPW is overseen by the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, and Minister of State with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works.

The organisation employs approximately 2,500 staff (including staff hired for short-term seasonal roles) in a wide variety of positions at its Headquarters in Trim, major centres in Dublin, Kilkenny and Claremorris, as well as approximately 100 other locations throughout the country.

The OPW is a geographically dispersed multi-disciplinary organisation that employs a variety of construction and other technical professionals, including but not limited to, Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Civil and Structural Engineers, Fire and Security Engineers, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers, horticultural staff such as Park Superintendents, scientific staff in the National Botanic Gardens, tour guiding staff as well as a large cohort of administrative staff.

1.3 Statement of Strategy 2023 - 2026

The OPW's overall high-level mission is set out in its current 'Statement of Strategy 2023-2026.'

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

The Vision of the organisation 'Our Built and Natural Environments in harmony' reflects the increasing focus on actions required to meet the Government's climate action goals to significantly reduce the State's carbon footprint.

The 2023-2026 OPW Statement of Strategy focuses on the four themes of:

- Our Clients – *Strengthening our Outward Facing Service*;
- Sustainability – *Embedding Sustainability in our Decisions*;

- Climate Action – *Mitigating and Adapting to the impact of Climate Change*;
- People and Processes – *Enhancing our Organisational Capability*.

In line with the Public Service Management Act 1997, an updated Statement of Strategy for the Office will be prepared within six months of appointment of the new Minister.

1.4 Summary of the OPW's Key Responsibilities

The OPW's wide ranging remit includes the following key areas of work:

- Managing 2,500 State properties, including circa 530 office buildings for civil servants and more than 700 Garda properties;
- Leading in the delivery of significant infrastructural projects and programmes for the State, such as Brexit related buildings at ports, the construction of the Forensic Science Ireland (FSI) Laboratory and the rapid build homes programme for Ukrainian families;
- Maintaining and presenting iconic heritage properties, including the UNESCO world heritage locations of Sceilg Mhichíl and Brú na Bóinne, 780 national monuments, 73 guided visitor centres and over 2,000 hectares of gardens and parklands which welcome over 15 million visitors annually;
- Leading Ireland's management of its flood risk at a time of climate crisis. This work includes implementing 150 additional flood relief schemes under the National Development Plan (NDP) to 2030. The OPW also has a statutory duty to maintain some 12,000km of river channels and 800km of embankments;
- In line with the Interdepartmental Report on Coastal Change Management Strategy, the OPW is undertaking a lead role in the technical assessment of coastal erosion hazards and risks;
- In addition, the OPW organises State events like Presidential visits, manages the State art collection, and oversees online sales of Government publications and provides election facilities for the State.

1.5 Legal Framework underpinning the operation of the OPW

The OPW operates within a legal framework which guides the core activities of the organisation. It is set out primarily, but not exhaustively, in the following enactments:

- Public Works (Ireland) Act, 1831, as amended
- The Public Works Loans Act 1892
- Commissioners of Public Works (Functions and Powers) Act, 1996
- State Property Act, 1954
- State Authorities (Development and Management) Act, 1993
- Arterial Drainage Acts, 1945 – 1995
- European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 – to 2015

- Coast Protection Act, 1963
- National Monuments Acts, 1930 – 2004

The Public Works Loans Act 1892 designates the Commissioners as a body corporate with perpetual succession that is a perpetual legal entity separate from the individual office holders.

Under the Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924, as amended, the jurisdictions, powers, duties and functions of the Commissioners and the exercise and performance thereof are subject to the direction and control of the Minister. The term "Minister" in this context means the Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform (DPENDR).

The OPW is designated as a scheduled office of the Department under the Public Service Management Act, 1997. The Act sets out arrangements for the management of departments and offices and the specification of individual responsibilities and accountability at a senior level.

In common with other Departments and Offices, the OPW is subject to the provisions of a range of legislation (both domestic and EU related). An indicative list of the main relevant domestic enactments, EU regulations and Directives is set out at Appendix 1.

1.6 Organisational Structure

The OPW's top management structure comprises the interlinked entities of the Commissioners and the other Management Board members.
The work of the OPW is carried out by the following divisions:

1. Estate Management
2. Planning and Climate Adaptation
3. Heritage Services and Capital Works Delivery
4. State/Principal Architects Office
5. Flood Risk Management
6. Corporate Services

A Senior Management Team (SMT) is in place which includes all Principal Officers and equivalent grades.

Details of the members of the Management Board and SMT can be accessed at http://www.whodoeswhat.gov.ie.

Minister
Under the Minister and Secretaries Act 1924, as amended, the Minister is the responsible head of the OPW and is responsible to Dáil Éireann for the administration of the OPW.

Minister of State
Special responsibility for the OPW is assigned to a Minister of State, at the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, who is nominated by the Taoiseach and appointed by Government.

The Minister remains responsible to Dáil Éireann for the exercise or performance of any powers or duties assigned to the Minister of State with special responsibility for the OPW. The Minister remains the responsible head to the Oireachtas for actions undertaken by officials of the OPW under his/her authority.

Chairman
The Chairman of the Commissioners is the administrative head of the organisation. Their functions include all aspects of the management of the OPW and advising the Minister and Minister of State on policy regarding the functions of the Office.

The Chairman is also the Accounting Officer for the OPW and is responsible for safeguarding funds under the control of the OPW and for ensuring economy and efficiency in the running of the business of the OPW.

The authority, responsibility and accountability of the head of office is covered by the Ministers and Secretaries Act, 1924, as amended, the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act, 1993 and the Public Service Management Act 1997. The 1997 Act also requires the head of office to prepare a Strategy Statement for the Minister's approval and an annual report on performance.

The Commissioners
The Public Works (Ireland) Act, 1831, provides for the establishment of three Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland (the Commissioners). The Public Works Loans Act 1892 designates the Commissioners as a body corporate with perpetual succession that is a perpetual legal entity separate from the individual Office holders.

The State Authorities (Development and Management) Act 1993 confers similar powers on the Commissioners as those of the Minister provided that the Commissioners obtain consent from the Minister in exercising those powers. The Minister bears political responsibility under the Act for all actions of the OPW.

The current commissioners are the OPW Chairman, John Conlon and Assistant Secretary, Robert Mooney. There is currently one Commissioner vacancy.

1.6.1 Management Board

The Management Board is a collegiate body established to provide vision and leadership for the Office as a whole. It plays a central role in providing advice on the formulation of the Statement of Strategy, the development and monitoring of the business planning process and in determining resource allocation.

The Board advises and supports the Chairman and the Commissioners in the exercise of their statutory functions. The Management Board is comprised of the Chairman, the State Principal Architect, 4 Assistant Secretaries and a Director. The contact details for, and a brief overview of the responsibilities of each management Board Member, is set out at Appendix 2.

1.6.2 Working Relationship with the Minister and the Minister of State

The Chairman of the OPW communicates regularly with the Minister and Minister of State and meets weekly or as considered necessary for discussion on the oversight of progress and monitoring of the functions of the OPW.

The OPW Management Board meets formally with the Minister of State on a quarterly basis or on an informal basis as considered necessary. Minutes of these meetings and decisions taken are recorded and maintained by the Chairman's Office.

Submissions to the Minister of State are generally presented to the Chairman in the first instance.

2. The OPW's Main Activities & Resources

The OPW manages a significant part of the State's property portfolio and provides accommodation for government departments and agencies in 531 buildings (of which 266 are State-owned, with 325 leases in place in the balance of 265 buildings. This office accommodation portfolio has a total floor area of 866,923m^2 of which almost 60% (516,717m^2) is State owned. The total rent paid in 2024 in respect of the leased portfolio was €111.2m. The OPW also manages approximately 690 Garda Properties.

The organisation is also responsible for leading and coordinating the implementation of the national flood risk management policy to protect against the risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.

Appendix 3 sets out some details of how the 2025 OPW Estimate (Circa €700m) is allocated across the organisation's activities.

An extract from the 2025 Revised Estimates Volume (REV) covering the OPW Vote (Vote 13) will be forwarded as a separate document for information.

There are five main business areas in the OPW as follows, each of which is supported by the Corporate Services Section:

2.1 Estate Management

The OPW's Estate Management objective is to hold, manage and maintain a property portfolio that is aligned to Government service delivery needs relating to size, location, specification, value for money and optimum utilisation.

Key activities include the:

- procurement of accommodation through the acquisition (both leasehold and freehold) and disposal of property;
- construction of new energy efficient buildings; and
- refurbishment and fit-out of existing office accommodation.

All of the above activities are undertaken to meet the needs of Government Departments and bodies. Blended Working policies have created new opportunities in relation to how the office accommodation footprint for the civil service will be managed in the long-term.

2.2 Property Management

Property Management comprises three areas: Accommodation, the Owned Estate, and Portfolio Planning & Property Advisory Services.

The Business Unit is responsible for the provision of office accommodation for the Civil Service, An Garda Síochána and various state bodies, and the delivery of property-related services to central Government Departments and Offices. This includes:

- Evaluating and quantifying the property needs of Government Departments and Agencies;
- Procuring and managing office accommodation through property acquisitions (leasehold and freehold) and targeted disposal of surplus property;
- Protecting the property estate through title registration and related legal/financial services relating to property management. This includes the:
    - Management of the Telecommunications Masts Programme;
    - Disposals Programme (including the granting of licences to third parties where appropriate); and
    - Management of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Agreement on the National Convention Centre along with administering the property of dissolved companies on behalf of the Minister for DPENDR;
- Providing strategic and structured portfolio planning services for managing the OPW's Estate Portfolio, with a pivotal role in implementing best practice governance arrangements under the Public Spending Guidelines, covering all aspects of capital and current projects in the area;
- The development of plans for portfolio consolidation, rationalisation, modernisation or sharing of buildings and facilities;
- Inputting into OPW Delivery Unit work programmes and a Capital Project Pipeline to support the work of the Project Oversight Group, which is responsible for approving projects and programmes and monitoring their delivery against budget, timelines and objectives; and
- The provision of professional advisory services both internally and externally to central Government Departments.

Property Management, in conjunction with OPW clients, has continued to progress efficiencies in the utilisation of the State accommodation portfolio as a result of the roll out of blended working policies. This has allowed the additional accommodation requirements arising out of an expanding Civil Service, to be met within the existing office footprint.

2.3 Property Maintenance Services

The OPW provides a shared service for statutory maintenance contracts and general building maintenance in over 2,000 properties nationwide. The OPW is mandated to carry out this work under the recently published Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) Circular 1 of 2025, which has replaced DPER Circular 1 of 2013.

In 2024, Property Maintenance Services delivered works and services in excess of €66.78m. These works and services include reactive, planned and preventative maintenance, minor capital projects, and client-funded projects. Further details on Property Maintenance expenditure in 2024 is set out below:

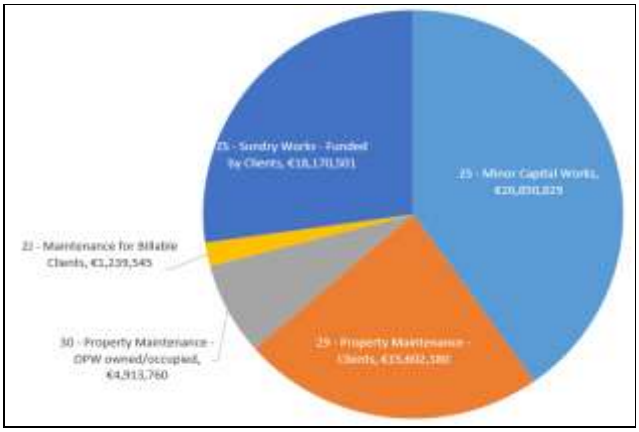

Figure 1: Property Maintenance Expenditure in 2024

2.4 Structure of Property Maintenance Services

Property Maintenance Services is comprised of the following areas:

- Building Maintenance Unit;
- Programme Management Unit;
- Client Engagement Unit;
- Eight integrated Regions;
- Fire & Security Unit; and
- Furniture Branch.

The Units support integrated and consistent frontline delivery of Property Maintenance Services to clients and ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance and investment in the buildings/properties within their remit. A diagram of the structure of Property Maintenance Services is set out below:

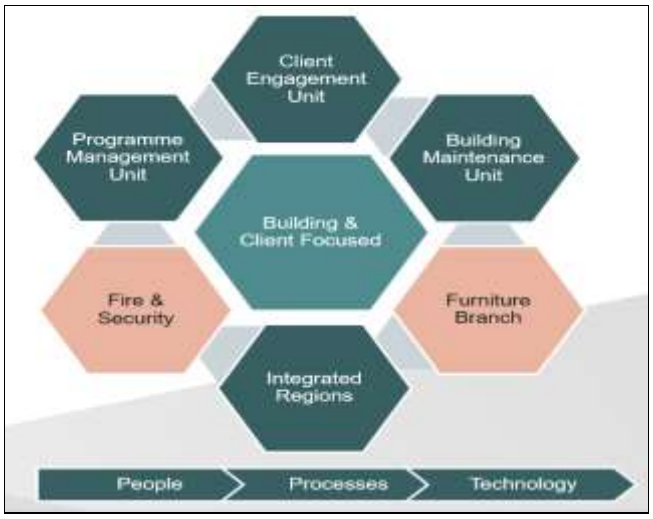

Figure 2: Structure of Property Maintenance Services

2.5 Mechanical & Electrical Engineering (M&E) Section

The Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) Engineering Section is primarily responsible for the provision of in-house consultancy services in the areas of mechanical, electrical and energy related engineering in buildings. The Section's clients comprise both internal business units in the OPW and external organisations.

The section works closely with a number of business areas within the OPW (Major Projects, Intermediate Projects, Property Maintenance and Property Management) and with a range of individual Government Departments and Agencies. Where the engineering consultancy service for capital works projects is outsourced to external consultants, the Section provides a briefing and monitoring service.

The section is also responsible for managing programmes of Planned Preventative Maintenance in the OPW portfolio of buildings and for the operation and management of the M&E Helpdesk in Santry. This is primarily an outsourced service which provides clients with a 24/7 helpdesk call centre facility for any problems that occur in over 2000 properties managed by the OPW.

3. Heritage Services & Capital Works Delivery

3.1 Capital Works Delivery – Intermediate Projects

The Intermediate Projects Section consists of technical and administrative staff based in offices in OPW Head Office in Trim, County Meath, 1 George's Quay, Dublin, and Claremorris, County Mayo. The Section's role is to provide high-quality design and project management services to deliver construction projects for a range of Government clients.

The Section delivers a continuous pipeline of approximately forty-five projects at various stages of their lifecycle. This involves working collaboratively with multidisciplinary experts

and consultants from within and outside the OPW to deliver projects for client agencies. The total estimated value of these projects is approximately €380m with a 50:50 ratio of funding from the OPW vote and from client Department/Agencies Votes.

They currently include:

- An Garda Síochána;
- Department of Social Protection;
- Department of Transport;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Foreign Affairs; and
- the Data Protection Commissioner.

3.2 Intermediate Projects Section – Recent Activities

In 2024, the Section completed a number of projects such as the:

- fit-out of 4,250m^2 of office space at Bishop's Square, Dublin for the Department of Foreign Affairs;
- National School at Craughwell, County Galway; and
- fire and security upgrade works at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, North Range, in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

Projects under construction and due to be completed throughout 2025 include:

- Westport Coastguard Station;
- Bailieborough Garda Station;
- An Garda Síochána evidence store at Drogheda Garda Station;
- Dublin Castle Record Tower; and
- two office fit-outs at Pembroke Row, Dublin 2 and Infinity House, Smithfield, Dublin 7 for the Data Protection Commissioners and Director of Public Prosecutions, respectively.

Other projects are at various stages of their lifecycle such as undergoing design or at tender stage.

3.3 Heritage Services

The OPW Heritage Services section is responsible for the conservation, protection and presentation of Ireland's national heritage estate. This is comprised of:

- 780 National Monuments;
- 32 National Historic Properties, including over 2,000 hectares of parks and gardens;
- over 100 stone buildings in Dublin which include Government Buildings, National Cultural Institutions, Leinster House, the Four Courts and Áras an Uachtaráin.

Over 1,300 staff are employed in Heritage Services at locations throughout the country. This workforce is diverse made up of stone masons, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, craft gardeners, guides, collections specialists, horticultural and botanical specialists, constables, park rangers, deer keepers, chefs, household assistants and curators. Dedicated craft workforces deliver maintenance and conservation to built heritage and designed landscapes across the portfolio. A large visitor experience team of guides oversee tours and interpretation of 73 guided heritage sites nationwide which welcome 15 million visitors annually.

3.3.1 Heritage Services – National Monuments

National Monuments Conservation and Administration teams are responsible for the conservation and presentation of the vast National Monuments estate which include two UNESCO World Heritage sites and a number of sites on the tentative world heritage list.

3.3.2 Heritage Services – National Historic Properties

National Historic Properties (NHP) has a multi–disciplinary team responsible for the care, maintenance, management and presentation of 32 significant properties, castles, houses, historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes across the State including the Phoenix Park, Dublin Castle, the National Botanic Gardens and the Great Blasket Island. NHP is responsible for operations and management of the household of the President and the State Guest House at Farmleigh as well as Government conferencing facilities located at Dublin Castle, Castletown House, Farmleigh, and Kilkenny Castle.

3.3.3 Heritage Services – Visitor Services

Visitor Services Section, based in Claremorris, County Mayo oversees the provision of visitor facilities, guide staffing, marketing and promotion of the OPW visitor heritage estate including the development and management of all ticketing, online booking, websites and engagement with the tourism trade.

3.3.4 Heritage Services – Dublin Conservation and Historic Building Maintenance Services

Dublin Conservation and Historic Building Maintenance Services leads on conservation protection and care of a range of high-profile historic buildings in Dublin occupied by Government, State Agencies and National Cultural Institutions. These buildings include the Custom House, the Four Courts, Collins Barracks, Dublin Castle, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Áras an Uachtaráin, Leinster House, National Gallery of Ireland and National Concert Hall.

Historic Building Maintenance Services (HBMS) is a direct labour workforce of 170 personnel across eight regions in Dublin and one in Cork. The workforce includes carpenters, painters, plasterers, plumbers, electricians and general operatives and promotes apprenticeships in trades vital for the conservation of the built heritage portfolio in OPW's care.

4. State Event Management Unit & Preparations for Ireland's Presidency of the EU (Second half of 2026)

The OPW State Event Management Unit (SEMU) provides ongoing services to Government in the delivery of an extensive annual programme of State events.

This unit is also charged with the operational delivery of conferencing and events for Ireland's Presidency of the EU. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) leads on the overall planning of policy and operations for the Presidency and the OPW works closely with their team on the planning, governance, procurement, venue selection, project delivery and conference operations of the Presidency programme. Working closely with the Department of the Taoiseach, An Garda Síochána and others, the SEMU is already significantly engaged in various aspects of the planning and operations of the Presidency schedule.

Dublin Castle will act as the central location for large portions of the programme and SEMU is working closely with DFA on a process of venue selection for circa 280 events and an expected attendance of circa 35,000 delegates into Ireland.

A significant programme of upgrading is required at Dublin Castle which has been planned to be delivered from Q2 2025- Q2 2026 including fabric and mechanical and electrical upgrading of all conferencing venues.

5. Office of the State/Principal Architect (OSPA)

The Office of the State/Principal Architect currently has direct responsibility for the following:

- capital works delivery involving projects and programmes in areas such as Brexit, Modular housing for Ukrainian Refugees; the Commemorative Bridge at Island Bridge War Memorial Gardens; Ireland's Pavilion for the Osaka Expo; Project Opera -Limerick 2030; Visitor Facilities at the Casino in Marino; and Custom House Masterplan;
- the development of architectural policy;
- Major Projects Section that delivers a programme of high-value, complex, largescale, new build and conservation projects including the:
    - Public Service Data Centre;
    - Forensic Science Laboratory;
    - Cultural Projects e.g. National Archives and National Centre for Research and Remembrance;
    - Garda National Building Programme e.g. Portlaoise Garda Divisional HQ; Office Accommodation e.g. Smithfield Hall and Leeson Lane Buildings; and
    - Pathfinder Projects e.g. Tom Johnson House.

5.1 Office of the State/Principal Architect (OSPA) – Advisory Services

The following services are also provided through the OSPA:

- a full architectural and project management service in the capital works delivery of projects and programmes of work. The projects involved include the Redevelopment of the National Concert Hall and the Dublin Family Courts at Hammond Lane. The services provided also include an advisory role supporting the delivery of NDP projects both within the OPW and across other departments and agencies;

- Civil & Structural Engineering Services provide a design, advisory, surveying and supervisory service on construction related matters to the estate portfolio management (EPM) and flood risk management (FRM) areas of OPW and to other Government Departments and agencies;

The engineers in this service operate in a variety of roles, including; engineering designer/adviser & design team member on the various projects. The Units project management role covers projects that range in size from providing small advisory reports to involvement in major construction projects.

6. Planning & Climate Adaptation

6.1 Flood Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment (which is under the remit of Planning and Climate Adaptation)

The OPW has responsibility for leading and coordinating a whole of Government approach to the implementation of the national flood policy and chairs the Interdepartmental Flood Policy Co-ordination Group. Flood policy has three key pillars – Prevention, Protection and Preparedness, which are underpinned by research and data evidence.

The OPW's Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme included a detailed study of the flood risk for 300 communities that are home to some 3 million people. The study encompassed two-thirds of Ireland's population, and approximately 80% of Ireland's flood risk from rivers and the sea. This informed the development of 29 Flood Risk Management Plans.

Building on the Flood Risk Management Plans, launched in 2018, 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. The OPW is in the process of developing a new Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management by September 2025 as required under the revised National Adaptation Framework.

The OPW is currently finalising the review of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment under the 3rd cycle of the EU 'Floods' Directive, that will update the national assessment of both current and potential future flood risk. Under the Directive, the OPW also reviews and updates the published flood maps when necessary and will need to develop a new Flood Risk Management Plan by 2027.

In promoting sustainable planning and development with regards to flood risk, the OPW supports planning authorities, and reviews and comments on all development plans and other forward looking planning documentation.

The National Flood Forecasting and Warning Service Steering Group, which is chaired by the OPW, has implemented Stage I of the National Flood Forecasting and Warning Service. This service informs preparatory action to reduce the severity and impacts of flooding. Proposals for the further development of the service are being developed by the Steering Group for approval by Government.

The Shannon Flood Risk State Agency Co-ordination Working Group, chaired by the OPW, was established by the Government in 2016 to enhance the ongoing co-operation of all State Agencies involved with the River Shannon and to introduce co-ordinated flood risk solutions that may have benefit in managing flood risk on the Shannon Catchment. The Group is focused on prioritising actions and activities that can help to manage flood risk along the River Shannon.

6.2 Coastal Change Management

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is leading and coordinating a whole of Government approach to coastal change management. The OPW has been designated as the national lead body for the assessment of coastal change hazards and risks and the assessment of technical options and constraints. The organisation has commenced a number of programmes of coastal survey and monitoring and the assessment of coastal erosion hazard areas and risk. This work is being carried out on foot of the Report of the Inter Departmental Group on National Coastal Change Management Strategy, which was published in 2023.

6.3 Climate Action and OPW's Property Portfolio

The OPW is playing a key role in Climate Adaptation (as outlined above) in addition the Government has set ambitious targets for decarbonisation and energy efficiency. A key action under the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate is the development of Building Stock Plans that will set out a pathway for public sector bodies in decarbonising their building stock to meet CAP targets. As a National Portfolio Lead, the OPW, in common with the other national leads, is responsible for producing a Building Stock Plan for its portfolio. The approach being adopted by the OPW is also being examined as part of a Public Sector Working Group (PSWG), which is a sub-group of the Heat and Built Environment Taskforce.

To inform the deliberations of the PSWG and to better understand potential options around the decarbonisation of its building stock, the OPW has completed a high-level assessment of approximately 200 significant energy use buildings (SEU's) and the campuses within its portfolio, ranked by overall energy usage. This assessment has identified a potential pathway for the decarbonisation of each SEU building and campus. The assessment takes into account the imperative to focus on rightsizing the portfolio, based on the client's requirements in a blended working environment. It also involves continuing to update the leased component, replacing poorly performing buildings with energy efficient alternatives, where it is feasible to do so.

7. Flood Risk Management

7.1 Flood Protection and Flood Scheme Delivery

The Flood Risk Management Plans, an output of the CFRAM Programme, provided the evidence for the Government's €1.3bn investment in flood relief under the National Development Plan to 2030, to protect approximately 23,000 properties in communities that are under threat from river and coastal flood risk.

Investment through the National Development Plan, and working in partnership with the local authorities, has allowed the OPW to treble the number of flood relief schemes at design, planning, or construction to some 100 schemes. Today, work to protect 80% of all at-risk properties nationally is completed or underway. Nationally, 55 schemes have been completed to date, at a cost of some €570m, which are providing protection to over 13,500 properties and an economic benefit to the State in damages and losses avoided estimated to be in the region of €2bn.
As a general overview the current position in relation to the delivery of the flood relief schemes is as follows:

- There are 11 schemes at construction (Stage 4): Athlone, Crossmolina, Glashaboy, King's Island, Morell River, Morrison's Island, the Poddle, the River Wad, Springfield, Templemore, and Whitechurch.
- There are 2 schemes at Detailed Design/Works Tender Stage (Stage 3): Arklow and Ballyhale.
- There are 6 schemes at or approaching Planning/Development Consent Stage (Stage 2): Ballina, Blackpool (River Bride), Kilkee, the Lower Lee, Mountmellick, and Raphoe.
- There are 76 schemes at Scheme Development and Preliminary Design Stage (Stage 1) or Scoping Stage, which includes 4 Tranche II pilot schemes.
- There are 54 Tranche 2 schemes that were identified in the Flood Risk Management Plans but were not prioritised. These are scheduled to be progressed under the National Development Plan to 2030.
- The following milestones are anticipated this year:

    - Commencement of construction of schemes: It is anticipated that schemes at

Arklow and Ballyhale may procure contractors to commence construction in 2025.

- Substantial completion of schemes: It is anticipated that the Athlone, Springfield, Templemore, and River Wad flood relief schemes will be substantially complete this year, providing flood protection to some 745 properties. Substantial completion of the Morell scheme may also occur in 2025 or early 2026.

7.2 OPW Support to Local Authorities for Minor Works

In carrying out its flood risk management functions, the OPW works in close co-operation with other State bodies, principally the local authorities, which have key responsibilities in the area of flood risk management in their respective areas.

As well as managing the programme of flood scheme delivery, the OPW supports local authorities to manage localised flood and coastal erosion risks under the OPW's Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme. Under this scheme, Local Authorities can undertake minor flood mitigation works or studies to address localised fluvial flooding and coastal protection problems within their administrative areas.

Under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme, applications are considered for projects that are estimated to cost not more than €750,000 in each instance. Funding of up to 90% of the cost is available from the OPW for approved projects.

7.3 Arterial Drainage Maintenance Programme

The arterial drainage maintenance programme comprises maintenance of some 12,000km of river channel and 800km of embankments for scheme constructed under the Arterial Drainage Act 1945. This provides drainage for some 260,000 hectares of agricultural lands, as well as a level of protection from flooding to infrastructure, including in excess of 20,000 properties, 2,400 kilometres of roads and 77 towns and villages. Under the Arterial Drainage Act 1945, the OPW completed 34 Arterial Drainage Schemes on river catchments, along with 5 Estuarine Embankment Schemes. The OPW has a statutory duty to maintain these completed schemes.

8. Corporate Services

The role of OPW's Corporate Services is to provide efficient and effective support to allow the wider organisation to deliver on OPW strategic business goals. The Corporate Services division comprises:

- Information and Communications Technology (ICT);
- Communications/Press Office including the FOI Unit;
- Human Resource Management (HRM);

- Policy, Innovation & Reform Unit;
- Financial Services;
- Government Publications and Election Services;
- Health and Safety, Internal Facilities, Business Continuity; and
- Governance & Risk Unit.

All the above business units undertake a range of initiatives to better equip the OPW's corporate support infrastructure to enable staff to meet the OPW's strategic challenges. The Corporate Services functions operate primarily from three of the OPW's main Offices in Trim HQ, County Meath, 1GQ in Dublin, and in Kilkenny.

9. Biodiversity

The OPW is one of a number of Government bodies working to support the delivery of Ireland's *National Biodiversity Action Plan*. The OPW has launched its own Biodiversity Action Strategy 2022-2026 to improve biodiversity across its entire operation. The strategy identifies 48 specific actions across five themes that the OPW will undertake to embed biodiversity into all areas of its work. A dedicated Biodiversity Unit has been established and Biodiversity Officer appointed.

Key priorities include biodiversity initiatives as part of OPW flood relief and arterial drainage schemes, biodiversity audits and studies at priority locations across the country, development of the National Seed Bank at the National Botanic Gardens and training and development for all OPW staff in biodiversity.

10. Art Management Office (AMO)

The OPW has responsibility for the most widely distributed public art collection in the State with over 90% percent of artworks on display in client locations around the country. The Art Management Office (AMO) is the operational unit managing the collection of 13,500 artworks. It organises exhibitions to share the collection with the public, including an annual cross-border exhibition in partnership with the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland.

The AMO manages the Government's Per Cent for Art scheme within the OPW's capital project portfolio whereby 1% of the construction budget is set aside for arts projects. The Head of Art Management has responsibility for commissioning official portraits and provides an art advisory service to other Government Departments including, but not exclusively, the Houses of the Oireachtas, Office of the President, and the Department of the Taoiseach. The Head of Art Management reports to the Chairman.

11. Internal Audit Unit

The Head of Internal Audit oversees the OPW's Internal Audit function, and is responsible for the provision of evidence-based assurance and technical advice and assistance across a broad range of areas impacting the organisation in general. The position has recently been upgraded to Principal Officer level and a recruitment competition to fill this post is currently underway.

The Head of Internal Audit reports to the Chairman, who is the Accounting Officer for the OPW, and the Audit & Risk Committee and operates under the administrative remit of the Assistant Secretary with responsibility for Corporate Services.

12. Data Protection Unit (DPU)

The OPW is a controller of personal data. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) informs, trains and advises the OPW staff, management and any organisations contracted by the OPW, that process personal data, regarding their obligations under European Union and national data protection legislation. The DPO also monitors the OPW's compliance both with data protection legislation and its own data protection policies/procedures and can undertake audits for this purpose. The head of the DPU currently reports directly to the Chairman and the operation of the Unit is under review.

Appendix 1 – Legislation underpinning the operation of the OPW

- Minister and Secretaries Acts 1924 - 2020
- Civil Service Regulation Acts 1923 - 2005
- Public Service Management Act, 1997
- Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR))
- Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (The Law Enforcement Directive (LED)
- Directive 2009/136/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 (The e-Privacy Directive)
- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018
- Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019
- Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001
- Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022
- Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015
- Official Secrets Act 1963
- Land Development Agency Act 2021
- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021
- Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

Appendix 2 – Details of the OPW Management Board

Name	Contact No	Area of Responsibility
Cathleen Morrison Assistant Secretary: Head of Estate Management	T: 046 9422747 [redacted]	Property Management: Owned Estate, Accommodation and Portfolio Planning; Property Maintenance Services; and Mechanical & Electrical Services.
Conor Sreenan State/Principal Architect (due to Join the OPW in Early March 2025)		Brexit Unit; Major Projects; State/ Principal Architect's Office & Capital Works Delivery; and Civil & Structural Engineering
Rosemary Collier Assistant Secretary: Head of Heritage Services and Capital Works Delivery	[redacted] T: 046 942 2204	National Historic Properties; National Monuments; Conservation and Capital Works Delivery; Biodiversity; and State Events
Robert Mooney Assistant Secretary: Head of Planning and Climate Adaptation	[redacted] T: 046 940 7272	Climate Champion; Flood risk management and climate adaption; and Flood risk management policy
Jim Casey Director: Head of Flood Risk Management	[redacted] T: 046 942 2908	Flood projects management services; flood risk management data services and flood relief design; and arterial drainage maintenance and construction services
Kathryn Whyte Assistant Secretary: Head of Corporate Services	[redacted] T: 046 942 6000	Financial Services; Human Resource Management; ICT; Policy; Communications; Internal Facilities Management; Business Continuity; Health & Safety; Government Publications and Election Services

Appendix 3 - OPW Estimate for 2025 – Key Highlights

The gross estimate for the OPW for 2025 is **€714m representing an increase of 9% on 2024.**

The **Capital allocation of €330m (14% increase) for 2025** will enable the OPW to progress delivery of:

- flood relief schemes to reduce the risk of river and coastal flooding to homes and businesses;
- a comprehensive programme of OPW Estate Management Capital Works projects;
- ongoing enhancement, conservation and presentation of 780 National Monuments and 32 National Historic properties with a combined provision of 73 visitor centres, nationwide.

The **increase in the OPW's pay allocation to €155.5m (6% increase)** will enable the OPW to:

- continue to manage the design and delivery of the above programmes as well as a range of projects and programmes funded from the Votes of client departments and agencies under the NDP;
- commence implementation of the OPW's work inputs to the National Coastal Change Management Strategy;
- increase the size of the direct labour workforce for delivery of flood relief projects;
- provide an enhanced level of customer service to the circa 15 million visitors to OPW sites annually.

The **balance of the OPW's non capital allocation €228.5m (8% increase**) will mainly enable the OPW to:

- Invest in infrastructure (Facilities, ICT, vehicles & equipment) that is essential for the effective operation of the organisation;
- Meet the cost of leased accommodation and service charges for accommodation provided to client Departments and agencies;
- Invest in maintenance of the OPW's estate; and
- Cover non-pay staff related costs (L&D requirements, Travel and Subsistence).