

The Government of Ireland

2016-2021

**Proposals for the Allocation of Ministerial portfolios, Ministers of
State and Departments**



Peter Brennan

087 2412001

pbrennan@epsconsult.ie

Introduction

This paper is based on an assessment of the policy priorities set out in party manifestos and a review of the Ministerial portfolios in other jurisdictions.

There are three central themes.

Firstly, the portfolios of the respective offices of the Taoiseach and Tánaiste are enhanced with the Taoiseach taking the lead on economic issues and the Tánaiste coordinating the Government's policy in the social area. Therefore social cohesion will be placed at the centre of Government.

Secondly, 15 Ministers of State are appointed with individual mandates to drive key elements of the Programme for Government.

Thirdly, the re-configuration of some portfolios is designed to re-group some areas of responsibility within more politically effective structures.

Two strategic initiatives for each Department have been identified.

Given that a systemic lack of strategic thinking and planning is the root cause of many current problems, a key recommendation is that the Super Junior Minister of State be given responsibility (within the Department of the Taoiseach) for the preparation of a 25 year National Strategy for Sustainable Economic Development and Social Progress which will complement the preparation of the National Planning Framework to 2032.

Department of the	Taoiseach
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivery of the Programme for Government 2. Government Secretariat 3. European Council 4. Inter-government relations 5. North South Ministerial Council 6. Chairman of the following Cabinet sub-committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Programme for Recovery - European Affairs - National Security - Infrastructure - Political and Constitutional Reform 7. National strategic planning
Main Changes	<p>The Office of the Taoiseach will, in addition to its historical duties, coordinate the Government main areas of economic policy and political reform.</p> <p>A new function – the development of a long-term strategic plan – has been added.</p> <p>Economic Management Council discontinued.</p> <p>Law Reform Commission transfers to D/CPNR.</p> <p>Diaspora transfers to D/FATD as does EU co-ordination (other than European Council).</p>
Super Junior	Responsible for the preparation of a 25 year National Strategy for Sustainable Economic Development and Social Progress.
Comment	While the Department of the Taoiseach remains the ‘senior’ Department some of its responsibilities in the area of social policy will be allocated to the Office of the Tánaiste.
Major New Initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish a national 25-year socio-economic strategy by 2018 (building on D/ECLG draft National Planning Framework to 2032). 2. Publish a White Paper on Ireland’s relationships with the UK and Northern

Ireland in the light of the outcome of the Brexit referendum.

Chief Whip

Office of the

Tánaiste

Priorities

1. Chairman of the following Cabinet sub-committees:
 - Health
 - Climate Change
 - Pathway to Social Inclusion
 - Public Sector Reform

Main Changes

The Office of the Tánaiste will, in effect, coordinate the Government's main areas of social policy and public sector reform to ensure a 'whole of government' approach to the reform programme led by individual Ministers.

Minister of State

None appointed.

Comment

If the Tánaiste is to be allocated a departmental portfolio D/PALS is the preferred option.

The Department to be resourced by the transfer of some economists from DPER's Economic and Evaluation Service.

Major New Initiatives

1. Publish an assessment of citizen-centred public service delivery in Ireland benchmarked against comparable smaller countries.
2. White Paper on the Government's response to Ireland's changing demographics.

Department

Finance

Priorities

1. Financial stability and risk management
2. Economic strategy based on the EU Stability and Growth Pact

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Stronger reporting from and supervision of the Central Bank 4. Development of the banking and financial services 5. Taxation policy 6. Revenue Commissioners 7. The winding down of NAMA
Main Changes	Responsibility for the IFSC Clearing House Group transfers from D/Taoiseach.
Minister of State	Responsible for ECOFIN European Affairs
Comment	<p>Mandate remains broadly the same.</p> <p>Higher emphasis on risk management being embedded in all government decision-making.</p>
Major New Initiative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up a renewed Commission of Taxation and expand remit to include social welfare payments. 2. Publish a response to the EU initiative. 'Completing Europe's EMU' in the form of a White Paper (having regard to the Brexit decision).

Department	Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foreign affairs 2. EU Co-ordination (other than European Council) 3. Relationships with the UK and Northern Ireland 4. International trade 5. Diaspora 6. Development cooperation and aid
Main Changes	<p>Takes responsibility for diaspora matters and EU Co-ordination from D/Taoiseach.</p> <p>Enhance and resource current economic development role e.g. development of educational projects with China and India.</p>

Minister of State	Responsible for the diaspora
Comment	Re-titled to reflect full scope of the portfolio
Major New Initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish a full socio-economic impact assessment of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. 2. Procure the setting up of a National Diaspora Centre as a PPP.

Department	Public and Local Services
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To set strategic expenditure targets for all departments and cross-department spending programmes 2. To accelerate the implementation of the on-going programme of public sector reform 3. E-Government 4. To secure savings through more professional procurement 5. To facilitate well-run cost effective public service delivery through local authorities and community groups 6. To provide targeted supports and services to rural communities
Main Changes	Addition of responsibility for local authorities and bodies responsible for rural and community development.

Minister of State	Responsible for public sector renewal and reform
Comment	The key elements of Public Sector Reform Plan to continue. A fresher more relevant remit is needed to reflect the availability of additional Exchequer resources and a demand that more services are delivered locally reflecting a 'whole of government' approach and to take account of payments made through the Local Property Tax. LPT yield should determine where and how local services are delivered. Bringing local authorities and other community bodies that are dependent on Exchequer funding within the remit of DPS will drive operational efficiencies and

improve on the ground service delivery.

A balance needs to be found between cost control initiatives and efficient service delivery. D/PALS should become a 'Can Do' department and one that facilitates public service delivery at local and community level.

Major New Initiatives

1. White Paper on delivering more public and community services (including tourism, enterprise, childcare, local policing, home care etc.) through local authorities.
2. Value for Money review of all public-type services provided by voluntary, charitable and community groups that are funded by the Exchequer.

Department

Health, Wellbeing and Sport

Priorities

1. Health
2. Services to older people
3. Primary care
4. Mental health
5. Disability services – Pathway for Inclusion
6. Wellbeing
7. Sport
8. Health and safety (including food safety)
9. Reducing the cost of pharmaceuticals

Main Changes

Addition of well-being and sport to the portfolio and food safety (from D/EHLG)

Roles of Ministers of State (3)

Responsible for Sport and Wellbeing, Services to Older People and Drugs

Comment

Remit (and title) expanded to bring well-being (including obesity) and sport within scope.

Smarter procurement should be used to drive down the cost of medicines and healthcare consumables.

White Paper on demographics (to be prepared by Tánaiste's Office) will inform *inter alia* short term resource allocations to older people.

Accountability across the entire healthcare sector

needs to be determined by legislation.

Re-configure hospital capacity requirements as primary care centres become fully operational.

Major New Initiatives

1. Key Performance Indicators, based on Service Level Agreements between the Department/HSE and service providers should be set with reference to outputs achieved in comparable jurisdictions and the data collected should be published to inform budget allocations.
2. Out-source services (such as nursing home provision, care of older people and the disabled) to private operators on basis of Service Level Agreements.

Department

Education, Skills and Science

Priorities

1. Pre-primary schooling
2. Primary, secondary and third level
3. Fourth level
4. Training and skills development
5. Science and research

Main Changes

Transfer of responsibility for science and research (which is largely academic driven) from D/JEI and D/AFM

Minister of State

Responsible for Science and Technology

Comment

D/ESS to drive the innovation, science and research agenda through the medium of the third and fourth level systems in collaboration with industry partners and stakeholders.

Serious consideration should be given to the transfer of the management, building and maintenance of pre-school and primary schools to local authorities as part of a wider strategy to deliver services as close to the customer as possible.

Major New Initiatives

1. Measure educational performance compared to global benchmarks of

	<p>educational achievement and allocate resources to bridge the gap.</p> <p>2. Invest in school infrastructure ahead of demand.</p>
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Department	Agriculture and Natural Resources
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farming 2. Agri-food 3. Food security 4. Fishing 5. Forestry 6. Equine industry 7. Marine
Main Changes	Higher emphasis on the horse industry
Minister of State	Responsible for Food Wise 2025

Comment	<p>Shorter title</p> <p>No change to portfolio</p> <p>Minister not responsible for Defence</p> <p>The spill-over effects of the expansion of farming activity as they relate to water, waste and methane emissions need to be identified, quantified and mitigated.</p>
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Major New Initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce a credible and costed response to the issue of the farming and agri-food sectors in terms of their contribution to the achievement of national climate change targets. 2. Carry out a VfM assessment of national and EU supports to the farming, agri-food and other sectors in the light of international trends and reform of the CAP.
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Department	Infrastructure and Planning
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivery of the 2015-2020 capital programme 2. Sectoral policy (housing, transport,

	<p>communications, energy, renewable energy, waste and water)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The construction sector 4. Development of a revised National Spatial Plan (National Planning Framework) 5. Foreshore licensing 6. OPW 7. Building Regulations 8. Regulating the regulators
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Main Changes	New Department
Minister of State	Responsible for Housing

Comment	<p>The economic regulators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competition and Consumer Protection Commission - Commission for Energy and Water Regulation - Commission for Communications Regulation - An Bord Pleanála - Office of the Director for Corporate Enforcement - Charities Regulatory Authority - Office of the Data Protection Commissioner - Commission for Aviation Regulation - National Transport Authority <p>This department will set national policy for economic infrastructure, provide strategic policy guidance to the independent economic regulators and coordinate sustainable infrastructure activity across government.</p> <p>A high priority for the OPW should be flood defence works.</p>
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Major New Initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise Cabinet Procedures to reflect EU and OECD best practice in relation to 'Better Regulation'. 2. Design a programme whereby Irish and other pension funds can co-finance on-going social and affordable housing provision and other appropriate infrastructure programmes.
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Department	Justice and Defence
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National security 2. An Garda Siochana 3. The Prison Service 4. The Defence Forces 5. Immigration 6. Youth justice and adoption

Main Changes

Defence added.

New emphasis on immigration.

Youth justice and adoption transferred from current D/CYA

Ministers of State (2) Responsible for Immigration and the Defence Forces

Comment

The main strategic advantage of combining the justice and defence portfolios will be the synergies and potential operational efficiencies that will result

To take account of this increased portfolio some the current responsibilities of the DJE have been transferred to the new DCPNR

Major New Initiatives

1. Procure private operators to release Gardai (in particular the Traffic Corps) from 'desk jobs' through the use of modern technology.
2. Reduce drug-related crime by better resourcing enforcement and community support agencies.

Department	Family, Children and Social Protection
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family policy and legislation 2. Children and youth 3. Social security payments 4. Childcare provision 5. Mental health 6. Disability
Main Changes	Remit of current D/SP expanded to ensure a more

coordinated approach to childcare and families

Tobacco control transfers to D/HWS

Ministers of State (2) Responsible for children (and childcare) and mental health

Comment More targeted resources should be deployed to support children, youth and young families

Major New Initiatives

1. Pathway to Social Inclusion Programme.
2. White Paper on the sustainable funding of a National Pension Scheme.

Department Enterprise and Economic Development

Priorities

1. Action Plan for Jobs
2. Small firms and indigenous development
3. Entrepreneurship
4. Intellectual property
5. Inward Foreign Investment
6. Competitiveness
7. Labour relations
8. Company law
9. Consumer protection

Main Changes Competition policy transfers to D/IP and science and innovation to D/ESS

Minister of State Responsible for employee and employer relations

Comment Primary focus is the delivery of the APJ

Major New Initiatives

1. Complete VfM assessment of Government supports for job creation and enterprise development (including the LEOs).
2. Assess State aid schemes in other Member States that support entrepreneurial activity and adapt them to suit Irish circumstances.

Department	Environment and Climate Change
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental policy (EPA) 2. Met Éireann 3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation 4. Mining 5. Oil and gas exploration
Main Changes	<p>New focus as local authorities transferred to D/PALS and housing and spatial planning to D/IP. As a consequence, much higher priority will be given to climate change.</p> <p>Mining and oil and gas development transferred from D/ECNR.</p>
Minister of State	No appointment
Comment	Given the outcome of COP 20 and the EU's 2030 emissions reduction policy addressing climate change now requires a much higher priority at Ministerial level. Advisory Council on Climate Change to report to D/ECC.
Major New Initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. White Paper on Ireland's climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy to 2030. 2. Application of sustainable development indicators across the whole of government.

Department	Tourism, the Arts, Culture, Heritage and the Irish Language
Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RTE and broadcasting policy 2. The development of the National Cultural Institutions 3. Integrating tourism attractions with arts, culture and heritage 4. Continuing the priority attached to the Irish language
Main Changes	<p>Broadcasting a better 'fit' within this department given its expanded remit.</p> <p>Better that tourism linked to arts etc., than transport and sport.</p> <p>Responsibility for the Gaeltacht and the islands transfers to D/PALS as the department is responsible</p>

for service delivery to rural communities.

Minister of State No appointment

Comment Expansion of current remit will give the Department a better opportunity to promote the uniqueness of being Irish.

Major New Initiatives

1. Assess how the creative sectors are supported by Government in other comparable jurisdictions.
2. Rationalisation of the agencies and bodies responsible for the Irish language.

Department **Constitutional, Political and National Reform**

Priorities

1. Constitutional referendums
2. Oireachtas and political reforms
3. Equality
4. Lobbying and standards in public office
5. Legal profession
6. Freedom of Information
7. Ombudsmen's Offices

Main Changes New department

Some responsibilities from D/PER and D/JE.

Minister of State None appointed

Comment This new department will be responsible for a wide range of issues, including all referendum campaigns, political and Oireachtas reforms, implementation of the Legal Services Regulation Act (and associated legislation) and coordination of the work of the various Ombudsmen offices (including the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, Ombudsman for Children's Office)

Major New Initiatives

1. Re-run referendum on Oireachtas investigations.
2. The 8th Amendment