

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

**First Progress Report
on the Statement of Strategy 1999 – 2002**

31 May, 2001

Table of Contents

Foreword by Finola Flanagan, Director General	2
Mission Statement of the Office and Key Objectives to pursue the mission	3
Chapter 1: Key Objective 1 and Strategies to pursue this Objective	4
Progress Achieved	4
Chapter 2: Key Objective 2 and Strategies to pursue this Objective	13
Progress Achieved	14
Chapter 3: Key Objective 3 and Strategies to pursue this Objective	22
Progress Achieved	22
Chapter 4: Key Objective 4 and Strategies to pursue this Objective	27
Progress Achieved	28
Chapter 5: Key Objective 5 and Strategies to pursue this Objective	36
Progress Achieved	36

Appendices

1. Organisation Chart	41
2. Tables of Expenditure for 1999 and 2000 and Estimates for 2001	42
3. Reports of Payment Practices for 1999	44

Foreword

Attorney General,

This is the First Progress Report on the Statement of Strategy 1999 – 2002 for the Office of the Attorney General. It has been prepared pursuant to section 4(1)(b) of the Public Service Management Act, 1997. Your predecessor, Mr. David Byrne, S.C., consented to the application of the Act to the Office with effect from 1 September, 1998. A Revised Statement of Strategy was presented to you and published in July, 2000.

Considerable progress has been made in implementing the Statement of Strategy, which covers both the Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office. I am confident that this progress will be maintained and indeed accelerated in the period up to 2002.

Increased and better trained staffing, improved technology, greater specialisation, enhanced communications throughout the Office combined with the dedication of staff in the Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office augurs well for the future.

Finola Flanagan
Director General

31 May, 2001

Mission Statement and Key Objectives to pursue Mission

The mission of the Office of the Attorney General is to provide the highest standard of professional legal services to Government, Departments and Offices

The Office will pursue its mission through the following five key objectives which are set out in the Statement of Strategy:

- To maintain and develop the provision of specialist legal services in all areas of law of major importance to Government, Departments and Offices.
- To have an office management and organisation which ensure efficient delivery of legal services to Government, Departments and Offices and which ensure an effective and productive working relationship which take into account the public service change programme.
- To develop a human resource management strategy linked to the overall objectives of the Office.
- To ensure that staff have access to the necessary information through the ongoing development of appropriate library services, information and knowledge management systems and continuing education.
- To contribute to effective public service by encouraging and assisting in the co-ordination of the legal services of the State.

Objective 1

To maintain and develop the provision of specialist legal services in all areas of law of major importance to Government, Departments and Offices, the Office will:

- continue to identify the areas of law, including new and developing areas, in relation to which the Office is required to provide specialist legal services so as to furnish a comprehensive professional legal service to Government, Departments and Offices and to enable the Attorney General perform the functions specifically conferred by the Constitution and legislation. In particular, the Office will:
 - ❖ continue to develop and improve the system of specialist divisions/groups;
 - ❖ in relation to the drafting function, implement the programme of the Statute Law Revision Unit; and
 - ❖ continue to keep abreast of legal and organisational developments in other law offices in Ireland and abroad;
- provide organisational structures, including systems for the distribution of work within the Office, within which lawyers will have the necessary opportunity to develop and practise particular areas of law taking due account of the preferences of the lawyers to specialise in particular areas of law;
- maintain and develop the expertise of each lawyer in the core areas of constitutional and administrative law;
- complete the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report on the redesign of the drafting process concerning the re-organisation of the Parliamentary Draftsman's Office;
- complete and bring into use the drafting manual for the Parliamentary Draftsman's Office;
- continue participation by members of the Office in the activities of law societies and organisations and professional bodies.

Progress Achieved

Advisory side of Merrion Street Office

- 1.1 The Advisory side of the Merrion Street Office has operated on the basis of functional groups since early 1997. Each group is headed by an Advisory Counsel Grade I (Assistant Secretary) who monitors throughput of files and ensures that certain target objectives, such as the disposal of the work in a timely manner, are met. Specialisation has enabled the Advisory Counsel (formerly Legal Assistants) to

increase their expertise, to handle the increased workload of the Office more efficiently, facilitating the exchange of information and the strengthening of a team, rather than an individual, approach to work.

- 1.2 The volume of work received in the Merrion Street Office has increased across all areas of law. In particular, developments relating to company law, flotations, IPOs, e-commerce, childhood abuse cases, freedom of information, human rights, refugee, asylum and immigration, privatisation, and public procurement issues, have become major areas of demand. An increase in staff numbers of seven was sanctioned in June, 2000, including an additional post of Advisory Counsel Grade I. Three additional Advisory Counsel Grade III joined the Office in December, 2000/January, 2001, with another five expected to join following a recruitment competition to be held in mid-2001. The intention is to have four functional groups on the Advisory side and the arrangements for this reorganisation are currently taking place.
- 1.3 A number of **informal groups** also operate within the Merrion Street Office, such as the monthly legal issues meeting (where legal issues of general concern can be raised), the regular group meetings by the different legal advice groups, the “Co-ordinators” meetings attended by Advisory Counsel Grade I, the Deputy Director General and the Director General, relating to legal and related developments within the Office, twice a week, the meeting of Advisory Counsel with responsibility for asylum to discuss asylum issues (weekly), and meetings of the group looking at the reorganisation of specialisms in the Office.

Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Government

- 1.4 The reorganisation of the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Government (formerly Parliamentary Draftsman’s Office) has taken place. A full review of the drafting process within the Office was undertaken so as to put in place structures and procedures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the process. The Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Government has been reorganised into three groups, each having responsibility for providing drafting services to a specific number of

Government Departments. Each group is headed by a person not below the rank of Parliamentary Counsel (Assistant Secretary). The Parliamentary Counsel are responsible for working with Departments to manage the programme of work for that Department. The Office is headed by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and weekly management meetings are held with the group heads.

The reorganisation of the Office was initiated with the needs of the legislative programme and the Government Legislation Committee in mind. At the same time new measures were introduced by the Government Chief Whip to facilitate the work of the Legislation Committee. These include agreeing adequate time scales in advance in relation to the preparation of Bills identified for a particular Dáil session. This enables the regulation of the flow of instructions to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Government to ensure sufficient time for the process of consultation and policy review required in the preparation of complex and lengthy legislation, and monitoring the progress on transposition of EU Directives by the Committee.

- 1.5 Sanction was received in November, 2000, to recruit an additional seven Parliamentary Counsel. These posts were advertised in November, 2000, written competition held on 5 February, 2001, interviews held on 21 – 23 May, 2001 and appointments are expected to be made shortly.

- 1.6 In August, 2000, the Interpretation Bill was presented to Dáil Éireann by the Taoiseach. The purpose of the Bill is to repeal the provisions of a number of earlier Interpretation Acts, to update the language of other provisions and, in some cases, broaden their scope. In addition, new provisions will enable legislation to be enacted with simpler interpretation provisions. The Bill was prepared and drafted within the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel. Consultations have taken place with the Law Reform Commission, particularly in the context of its *Report on Statutory Drafting and Interpretation: Plain Language and the Law* and aspects of that Report will be reflected at Committee Stage of the Bill.

- 1.7 Work on the drafting manual in the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel is nearing completion and a working draft is available electronically on a database to all legal staff within the Merrion Street Office. The manual deals with the structure of legislation (standard components of Acts and layout) and the use of language within legislation.

A checklist and guidelines for the preparation of Statutory Instruments is being prepared in the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Government. It consists of checklists for the composition of a draft instrument and guidelines on drafting and the correct style to be used. It is hoped the checklist and guidelines will be an on-going project which can be improved upon.

Complementing the work on the drafting manual (and the Statutory Instruments, Checklist and Guidelines), a Research Officer – Drafting Services was engaged in October, 2000, on a one-year contract basis by the Office. His role is to undertake research, in close collaboration with Parliamentary Counsel, into key areas of drafting where consistency of approach would be useful. To date, the Research Officer has conducted research into immunity clauses, licensing, offences and penalties, authorised officers, savers and transitional provisions and the establishment of bodies. This research and subsequent research is, and will continue, to form the basis for further work by him, in conjunction with Parliamentary Counsel, to develop a consistent approach by drafters in those areas.

- 1.8 In March, 2001, a consultant drafter from abroad joined the two domestic consultant drafters. Plans for the recruitment of a further consultant drafter from abroad in Autumn 2001 are at an advanced stage. Following a meeting between the Attorney General and the Attorney General of Botswana, it was agreed that the Office would take a member of the latter's staff on secondment, in order to gain experience and develop the process of jurisprudence in Botswana. She joined the Office for a six-month period from October, 2000, to April, 2001, and was involved in many drafting projects.

- 1.9 In March, 2001, an Administrative Officer was assigned to support the Drafting Office reorganisation and new working arrangements. The initial appointment has been made on a temporary basis for a 12- month period.

Statute Law Revision Unit

- 1.10 The Statute Law Revision Unit was established in 1999 to draw up and implement a programme of statute law revision and consolidation. It has been recognised in the Report of the Law Offices of the State Strategic Review Group and in *Reducing Red Tape- An Action Programme for Regulatory Reform in Ireland* that a programme of statute law revision and consolidation was essential for the creation and maintenance of an accessible Statute Book which in turn is central to the effective operation of the legal system. The first part of the programme of the Unit has been to research and make recommendations in respect of new policies to deal with the problems associated with the Statute Book. It has made recommendations to the Attorney General in respect of policies on consolidation, revision and the management of the Chronological Tables to the Statutes and Statutory Instruments (popularly referred to as the ‘Indexes to the Statutes’).

The first of these recommendations led to the publication of the Statute Law (Restatement) Bill, 2000. The Bill, when enacted, will permit the Attorney General to make available administrative consolidations (consolidations that are prepared by the Office of the Attorney General in consultation with Departments). These consolidations, to be known as restatements, will not alter the substance of the legislation and, when certified by the Attorney General, may be cited in court as *prima facie* evidence of the law set out in it. Work is continuing on the development of policies for the revision of Statutes and the publication or making available electronically of ‘indexes’ to the Statutes and Statutory Instruments.

- 1.11 A programme of consolidation and revision is being prepared in consultation with all Government Departments, Offices and the Central Regulatory Reform Resources Unit

in the Department of the Taoiseach in accordance with the Recommendations of *Reducing Red Tape- An Action Programme of Regulatory Reform in Ireland*.

- 1.12 As part of a policy of increasing accessibility to the Statute Book, the Office has made available Statutes and Statutory Instruments on CD-ROM from 1922 to 1998. Work is at an advanced stage to make available a CD-ROM from 1922 to 2000, and thereafter to make CDs available with those materials in as up-to-date manner as possible.

The Website of the Office also displays the Statutes and Statutory Instruments from 1922 to 1998 and work is at an advanced stage to enable those materials to be brought up to 1999 and thereafter to make the information available in as up-to-date manner as possible.

Work is at an advanced stage to enable the Chronological Table to the Statutes and the Indexes to the Statutory Instruments to be brought up-to-date and to make them available on the Web page of the Office.

Consideration is also being given to the publication of a subject index to the Statutes and the making available electronically of the pre 1922 Statutes.

Legal Attaché to the EU

- 1.13 The assignment in 1996 of a Legal Assistant from the Merrion Street Office to act as legal attaché to the Permanent Representation to the European Union has proved successful and the role has expanded and developed in scope and depth. It is now a central and intrinsic element of the effective functioning of the Permanent Representation in Brussels. The evolution of the role has enabled the early involvement of the Office in all important EU negotiations including Treaty reform, the Inter-Governmental Conference, the Convention on the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

1.14 The coming into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam and the addition of Title IV to the EC Treaty by the Fourth Protocol, combined with the Schengen Protocol and the vastly increased activity in the area of Justice and Home Affairs generally, have led to rapid growth of the requirement within the Permanent Representation for legal advice.

Chief State Solicitor's Office

1.15 In the Chief State Solicitor's Office an Asylum Section was established in the Civil Litigation Division in November, 2000, to meet the ever-increasing demands for legal services in this area. Specialised groups have also been set up in the Civil Litigation Division to deal with the following class-type actions that have emerged in recent years:-

- Childhood Abuse Compensation cases – group of 12 dealing with over 1,000 current claims
- Garda Hearing Loss Compensation cases – group of 5 dealing with 109 current claims
- Health Impairment Compensation cases as a result of exposure to asbestos – group of 2 dealing with 31 current claims

1.16 In January, 2001, the Conveyancing Division established a series of teams to undertake work on behalf of specified departmental clients. The team approach has been adapted in the Division as distinct from sectional organisation with three team leaders having the same management role as section leader elsewhere in the Office.

1.17 In November, 2000, the Office retained the services of a firm of Town Agents to look after outdoor duties such as filing documents in the Courts, Land Registry and Registry of Deeds.

Participation in the activities of law societies and organisations and professional bodies

- 1.18 The Office encourages participation in the activities, organisations and professional bodies and familiarisation with legal and organisational developments in other law offices in Ireland and abroad. In October, 2000, the Office paid the patronage fee of £50,000 arising from Ireland's membership of the Foundation Academy of European Law Trier. The Academy is a continuing education and discussion centre for lawyers throughout Europe and legal staff from the Office regularly attend events from the Academy's conference programme. Also, legal staff regularly attend briefings and seminars held in the Institute of European Affairs. The Institute provides an independent forum for the development of Irish strategic policy responses to the process of European integration, through research, publications, expert working groups, briefings and seminars.
- 1.19 Both parts of the Office pay the subscription of members of each Office to the Corporate and Public Services Solicitors' Association. The Chief State Solicitor's Office is also represented on the Corporate and Public Sector Committee of the Law Society.

Legal and Organisational developments in other Law Offices in Ireland and abroad

- 1.20 Legal staff of both parts of the Office have continued to attend educational conferences, seminars and meetings on legal subjects, both in Ireland and abroad.
- 1.21 In 1998, an Advisory Counsel from the Merrion Street Office visited law offices in the United Kingdom to identify areas of common interest.

- 1.22 In March, 2000, legal staff attended the Tech Show Conference organised by the American Bar Association in Chicago and also visited private practices and a Government Department to examine how these Offices utilised IT systems. Staff in both Offices have also visited some of the major practices in Dublin to inspect their IT applications and, more recently, their e-mail policies.
- 1.23 In December, 2000, Advisory Counsel paid a courtesy visit to the Irish judges of the Court of Justice of the European Communities and the Court of First Instance in Luxembourg.
- 1.24 In February, 2001, legal staff from the Merrion Street Office met with officials in the UK's Home Office and also with members of the legal profession, to discuss the current operation of the UK Human Rights Act, 1998, in the context of the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights Bill, 2001. These meetings were considered relevant in relation to seeking to establish equivalent levels of protection for the purposes of the Good Friday Agreement.
- 1.25 In March, 2001, the Director General and the Chief State Solicitor attended a one-week course in Harvard University, Massachusetts, USA entitled "Leading Professional Services Firms". The course was aimed at managing partners and senior departmental heads of law firms, accounting firms, investment banks and other professional service bodies.

Key Objective 2

To have an office management and organisation which ensure efficient delivery of legal services to Government, Departments and Offices and which ensure an effective and productive working relationship which take into account the public service change programme, the Office will:

- ensure that time is allotted so as to allow for both the efficient discharge of day-to-day business and for the work required to plan, develop, monitor and review key objectives;
- approach development at all levels within the Office on the basis of partnership, good communication and shared interest;
- continue to develop its management structures;
- improve internal and external communication systems;
- examine how the further use of information technology can support achievement of our key objectives and in particular will:
 - ❖ develop and implement a new IT Plan for the Office which takes into account the different business arrangements in the Offices, having regard to the need for information exchanges between them.
 - ❖ develop financial management information systems.
 - ❖ greater co-ordination of IT between Merrion Street Office and Chief State Solicitor's Office;
- continue the programme of document and record management;
- continue to develop the Office's work management systems;
- develop a comprehensive Office procedures manual;
- develop and enhance all corporate services within the Office;
- put internal audit procedures in place;
- develop effective performance indicators;
- seek feedback from Government, Departments and Offices including through client surveys.

Progress Achieved

Management Expertise

- 2.1 The management expertise has been actively expanded in the Office by a number of specific activities including the development of an Office strategy by senior management (under the guidance of an outside consultant and attendance at management training in the case of the Chief State Solicitor's Office) and greater involvement by the Management Advisory Committees in the general management of both parts of the Office. The Merrion Street Office is devising a programme for management training also.

Administration organisation in the Merrion Street Office

- 2.2 The organisation of the Administration side of the Merrion Street Office is now much more streamlined. The previous arrangement of most non-personnel related work being handled by a central General Office meant that too many of the immediate day-to-day demands were being funnelled into a single section. In 1998 this was reorganised into separate Personnel (now expanded to Human Resource Management which includes a Training and Development Officer), Finance and Services Units. In April, 2000, the position of Systems and Services Manager, which had encompassed the Personnel, Finance and IT functions was divided, and a second Assistant Principal Officer appointed. The Administration side now has two posts at AP level, one having responsibility for Human Resource Management and the other Information Technology.

Review of organisational arrangements in the Chief State Solicitor's Office

2.3 The organisational arrangements for the delivery of a quality service to customers are kept under constant review. The Office has been studying the organisational implications of developments in the structure of the State's legal services, particularly the recommendation in the Nally Report to transfer criminal prosecution work to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the establishment of the State Claims Agency. A Solicitor to the Director of Public Prosecutions was appointed in November, 2000. It is intended that the formal transfer of responsibility for the Criminal Division will take place in October, 2001, when temporary accommodation becomes available in Upper Abbey Street, Dublin.

Partnership

2.4 In June, 1999, the Merrion Street Office established a Partnership Committee in accordance with the Partnership 2000 Agreement. The preparatory process for establishing the Committee involved management and unions and resulted in agreed operating arrangements which ensured that unions, management and staff were involved in the process and represented on the Partnership Committee from the beginning. Staff representation on this Committee also includes contract staff. The Committee's Action Plan focused on certain key issues, i.e., training, bullying in the workplace, and communications. A Group working under the auspices of the Partnership Committee was asked to report on the training needs of support staff including, in particular, staff who are new to the Office and prepared an Induction Manual, which is made available to all new staff. To build on this, another Group produced a "starter pack" booklet that is a distillation of the key information that new staff would find particularly useful. A Support Colleague Programme has been launched which complements the Civil Service-wide *A Positive Working Environment*. The Partnership Committee meets every two months. Issues being addressed by the Partnership Committee include Staff Training and Development, Team Building, Performance Management, Equality, Flexible Working Arrangements, Customer Service and Accommodation. The Partnership Committee is currently involved in the examination of Business Plans and the extrapolation from

them of sectoral performance indicators.

- 2.5 A Partnership Committee has been in existence in the Chief State Solicitor's Office since February, 1999. Many staff members have contributed extensively to the success of Partnership by serving on sub-committees and undertaking a variety of tasks under the Partnership umbrella. Initially an outside facilitator was employed to get Partnership in the Office up and running; the facilitator has now completed his task. The practice now is that all major organisational, procedural and other developments are discussed at Partnership before any change takes place. The Partnership Committee has examined Business Plans and the extrapolation from them of sectoral performance indicators.

Communications

- 2.6 Communications within the Merrion Street Office is a key area for discussion at the full Partnership Committee. The minutes and agenda of Management Advisory Committee meetings are available to all staff within the Office on the Office's intranet, along with the minutes of the other in-house committees. It is the policy to have staff from different parts of the Office involved in committees and working groups where appropriate. Practical initiatives through the Partnership Committee include a "Who's Who" database with their photographs of all staff in the Office. Generally, as the Office is a relatively small one any member of the Office speaks to another as the need arises without the need for formal arrangements.
- 2.7 On the legal side of the Merrion Street Office there are a number of group meetings which assist in the improvement of internal communications – the Advisory Counsel general issues meetings (monthly), the Advisory Counsel/Parliamentary Counsel general issues meetings (tri-monthly), the Advisory Counsel group meeting and "Co-ordinators" meetings which deal with management and organisation as well as purely legal issues and the meeting of Advisory Counsel with responsibility for asylum to discuss asylum issues (weekly). The Director General meets with the Statute Law Revision Unit (weekly) to discuss issues relating to the work programme

of the Unit. Parliamentary Counsel meetings are also held regularly. The individual Advisory Counsel and Parliamentary Counsel groups meet regularly.

- 2.8 In the Chief State Solicitor's Office the development of communications structures has improved through Partnership. Arrangements have been put in train to meet representatives of client Departments on a regular basis. Preliminary work on the provision of a client guide has been undertaken. Within the Office a Communications Group under the auspices of Partnership recommended a range of communication methods and these were implemented and are continually monitored by the Group. The measures taken include regular section meetings, meetings with the Chief State Solicitor, issue of reports on discussions at MAC.

Telephonist Service in the Merrion Street Office

- 2.9 In August, 1999, the Merrion Street Office installed its own PABX, giving the Office for the first time its own dedicated telephonist service. The Office had previously shared the telephone system with the Department of the Taoiseach. The majority of calls are received through the main switch, while many more are received directly by staff through the PABX Direct Dialling Inwards facility.

Information Technology Plan

- 2.10 Work started early in 2001 on the preparation of the IT Plan, 2001-2004 for the Office. The preparation will be in two phases - the development of information, application and technical strategies, and the preparation of a three-year IT development and investment programme. The request for tenders was prepared, and responses evaluated, by a Project Board representative of both the Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office. The RFT included a mandatory requirement that the high level of interaction within the Office, and the fact that the functions carried out by each of its constituent areas are distinctly different, be taken into account. The contract was awarded at the end of December, 2000, to

PriceWaterhouseCoopers and the new IT Plan is expected to be made available in June, 2001.

Records Management in the Merrion Street Office

- 2.11 The Merrion Street Office of the Attorney General is committed to a records management programme to ensure that it has control over all its documents, as early as possible in their life cycle. Registry was one of the first areas in the Merrion Street Office to change procedures through using electronic systems. Registry provides considerable added value to correspondence received, by providing an initial profile of items indicating the subject matter and work category of the correspondence. The separate registry systems for the Advisory Counsel functions and the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel were merged in late 2000 into a single Registry for the legal work of the Office. The IT Plan, 2001 – 2004 will assess and develop record management systems to ensure that it delivers the full potential for management information.
- 2.12 The Merrion Street Office has developed (in-house) separate but integrated Administration Filing and Correspondence Tracking systems. These systems record and track all non-legal matters in the Office. At present they are separate from the Legal Registry. The IT Unit has also developed a number of bespoke systems for use within specific Units of the Office. The development of a system for recording details of the Office's capital asset details commenced during 2000, and will go live shortly. Amendments to the Work in Progress (WIP) databases were carried out to facilitate the amalgamation of the Registries and other evolving user requirements. A new Enquiry system was developed for the Library.
- 2.13 Preliminary planning work has been done in the Chief State Solicitor's Office towards the provision of full, up-to-date and current records in advance of the development of any new systems to be introduced in the Office as a result of the PriceWaterhouseCooper review of IT systems.

Financial Management Information Systems

- 2.14 In July, 2000, the Merrion Street Office developed (in-house) a new comprehensive Accounts system for handling all invoices received in the Office. This enhanced Financial Management System ensures the effective and efficient use of the Office's financial resources thereby ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997. The Department of Finance continue to provide a paying agent service to the Office and the management reports generated by the system complement those generated by the Financial Management System in that Department.
- 2.15 The Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office have recently assigned a staff member from each Office to co-ordinate the implementation of the Management Information Framework in the Offices. While some work has been undertaken in both Offices, more rapid progress is expected during 2001.

Internal Audit Procedures

- 2.16 Consultation is ongoing between the Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office with a view to putting in place internal audit procedures. It is expected that an internal auditor will be appointed in June, 2001.

National Archives Obligations

- 2.17 During 1999 and early 2000 the Merrion Street Office began a project to bring up-to-date its obligations under the National Archives Act, 1986. An independent company, ARCLINE Ltd., was contracted to examine all the Office's pre-1970 records. The

company operated under the instruction and guidance of the Office. As a result of the project almost 10,000 records were transferred to the National Archives in July, 2000, allowing 1970 records to be transferred in December, 2000. Records withheld are being reviewed.

- 2.18 The Chief State Solicitor's Office deposited a large number of records with the Public Records Office in the early 1980s. The CSSO has an exemption from the National Archives in relation to the destruction of certain categories of records after specific time periods. The CSSO proposes to engage a consultant to review its records so as to ensure that it meets its obligations under the National Archives Act, 1986.

Business Plans

- 2.19 Draft Business Plans have been prepared for all sections of the Office, and a number of staff from the Office, attended a course run by the Centre for Management and Organisational Development (CMOD) of the Department of Finance on Performance Management and Development in December, 2000. The Irish Management Institute (IMI) have commenced a programme for all staff in the Merrion Street Office in the period May – June, 2001, which will provide the necessary training for the commencement of performance management.
- 2.20 In consultation with the IMI, performance indicators for the various staff categories in the Office are being identified. The Office will submit these sectoral performance indicators to the Quality Assurance Group in the coming weeks in order to comply with the terms of the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF). The Chief State Solicitor's Office overarching Business Plan has been prepared and approved at Partnership. Consultation with the Unions are nearing completion and MAC with sign off on the plan in the near future. This process is also underway in the Merrion Street Office.

Client Service Guide

2.21 Work on a draft Client Service Guide is proceeding.

Office Manuals

2.22 A first draft of separate Office Manuals for the Merrion Street Office and the CSSO were prepared during 2000. These comprehensive drafts require considerable further work before they can be introduced in the Offices.

Key Objective 3

To develop a human resource management strategy linked to the overall objectives of the Office, the Office will:

- take all necessary steps to recruit appropriately qualified staff and minimise vacancies;
- seek to put in place career structures which will attract and retain suitably qualified staff;
- develop a performance management process with objective measures of performance that is reliable, consistent and relevant, designed to enhance development of all staff and which will include:
 - ❖ defining the skills and competencies needed by members of the Office for their work;
 - ❖ providing on a planned basis, all necessary training (including training for management responsibilities) and the necessary resources for training in order to develop those skills and competencies;
 - ❖ reviewing and appraising on an ongoing basis organisational, team and individual performance;
 - ❖ having an open and transparent system of promotion;
 - ❖ building feedback mechanisms to enable the Office to monitor progress in the achievement of objectives.

Progress Achieved

Recruitment in the Merrion Street Office

- 3.1 The Office of the Attorney General is an independent law Office but is subject to the same pay and staff numbers controls as all Government Departments. Additional posts were sanctioned in June and November, 2000, and February, 2001, for the advisory, drafting and administration sides of the Merrion Street Office. Some posts were subsequently filled and arrangements to fill the remaining vacant posts are in train. A meeting between the Office and the Office of the Civil Service Commission to identify the needs of the Office took place on 6 March, 2001. This has been followed up by way of a further meeting on 24 April, 2001 and telephone contacts.

- 3.2 The Merrion Street Office has recruited specialist staff, many on contract, for functions such as drafting, Know-how, Library, indexing, research and typing. In addition, a second Assistant Principal Officer has been appointed on the Administrative side of the Office so that the Information Technology and the Human Resource Management responsibilities are now separated. In total 80 persons were recruited to various posts throughout the period from June, 1999. Interview boards were convened to deal with the recruitment and all boards, with the exception of some for the engagement of temporary typists, included a member from outside the Office so as to ensure impartiality and broad perspective.
- 3.3 After receiving sanction from the Department of Finance in November, 2000, the Merrion Street Office appointed its first Training and Development Officer in January, 2001, who is part of the Human Resource's Unit. The role of the officer is designed to draw together the various existing training and development options available to the Office with a view to ensuring the most effective utilisation and development of all staff resources. The Training and Development Officer has prepared a Business Plan and key aspects will include Performance Management training and induction of new staff to the Office. The Training and Development Officer will draw on the recommendations of Report No. 38 of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Dáil, on Training and Development in the Civil Service. A new, dedicated training room will be provided, which will allow for more focused and systematic training in the Office.

Recruitment in the Chief State Solicitor's Office

- 3.4 There was considerable negotiation with the Department of Finance and the Unions in the Chief State Solicitor's Office about the resourcing of that Office and, in particular, issues around starting pay and retention. The negotiations concluded at the end of April, 2001, following which the relevant unions balloted their members. Eventually, after a rebalot by one of the unions, the proposals were accepted on 5 May, 2001. Approval has been obtained to increase staff numbers over most areas of the Office.

Some recruitment of the extra staff has already taken place and the main recruitment campaign will commence in June, 2001. The CSSO has developed a recruitment campaign plan with the assistance of an independent consultant. The CSSO has also been in contact with the Civil Service Commission in relation to recruitment.

- 3.5 Negotiations with the Staff Side in the CSSO, which included the introduction of more attractive recruitment grade structures and improved career opportunities, have been satisfactorily concluded. A comprehensive package of improvements including a professional starting scale with progression to £40,000 in six years, a major improvement in promotional opportunities, a large increase in staff numbers and a variety of other concessions was offered to the Staff Side. This comprehensive package is seen as providing a platform for the recruitment and retention of high quality staff. Inability to reach agreement with the Staff Side on these proposals hindered progress in these areas to a considerable extent up to now.
- 3.6 A new apprenticeship scheme for technical staff in the CSSO was introduced in November, 2000. This involved the payment of full salary during participation in the Law Society Professional and Advanced Courses. At present, one technical staff member is benefiting from the scheme and it is hoped that more technical staff will avail of the scheme in the future. Furthermore, it is intended to use the scheme as an incentive to attract new staff in the Offices' recruitment campaign plan.
- 3.7 Members of the clerical staff in the CSSO have been encouraged to undertake courses of legal studies with a view to qualifying for entry to the technical grades. A number of staff are currently attending the Dublin Institute of Technology and the refund of fees arrangements are being applied. The introduction of revised entry qualifications for the technical recruitment grades, which included the abandonment of the requirement for experience in a private solicitor practice, has removed a major obstacle to the entry of clerical staff to the technical stream.
- 3.8 The training and development function in the CSSO is operated at present from within the Human Resource Management Division.

Induction of new staff in the Chief State Solicitor's Office

- 3.9 A sub-committee of the Partnership Committee in the CSSO was established to advise on a suitable induction regime for new staff to that Office. A draft report by the sub-committee has been prepared and a programme accepted at partnership. The first induction course will take place in June, 2001. A mentoring scheme for new recruits has commenced.

Business Plans

- 3.10 The process of preparing Business Plans for all areas of the Office is in progress. The process is being steered by a Business Planning Group representative of both the Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office. The Business Plans are a key component in the Performance Management and Development System and are necessary in order to formulate sectoral performance indicators. In that context the Business Plans for all areas of the Merrion Street Office are currently being reviewed in consultation with the Partnership Committee in the Office.

Performance Management

- 3.11 Like other Civil Service Departments and Offices, the Office is in the process of introducing a Performance Management system. Some training for staff has already taken place and currently a strategy for rolling-out the system throughout the Offices is in place with a view to having all staff attend a formal introduction to the new system by mid-2001.

Management and Development Training

3.12 Management and development training has been provided for all staff with managerial responsibilities in the Chief State Solicitor's Office. An outside training organisation (IMI) has been engaged to provide personal development training, including some managerial modules, for any staff willing to attend. It is anticipated that over one hundred staff will attend. It is intended that a similar initiative for all relevant staff will be advanced in the Merrion Street Office and the Training and Development Officer is currently examining the matter. The Director General has undertaken, and a member of the legal staff from each part of the Office are currently undertaking, a two-year masters degree course in Public Sector Management under the auspices of Trinity College, in the Irish Management Institute in Sandyford, Co. Dublin. The Director General and the Chief State Solicitor attended a one-week management course in Harvard University, USA, in March, 2001 and entitled "Leading Professional Services Firms". The course was aimed at managing partners and senior departmental heads of law firms, accounting firms, investment banks and other professional service bodies and dealt with internal and external leadership issues that might affect firms.

Human Resource function within the Offices

- 3.13 A sub-group of Partnership in the Chief State Solicitor's Office produced the most extensive report to date on the Human Resource function with a wide variety of recommendations. A working group was subsequently set up with a remit to prioritise the recommendations and advise on implementation methods in respect of that Office. Its first report was produced towards the end of 2000.
- 3.14 The Merrion Street Office is also considering how the Human Resource function in Merrion Street is being enhanced from a more limited Personnel Unit to a fully functioning Human Resource's Unit covering all aspects of human resource management. In that context, a Training and Development Committee is being established to oversee all aspects of training and development.

Key Objective 4

To ensure that staff have access to the necessary information through the ongoing development of appropriate library services, information and knowledge management systems and continuing education, the Office will:

- continue to develop integrated library, know-how and information services throughout the Office including:
 - ❖ providing a high quality, pro-active law library and information service with an emphasis on making information available at the desktops;
 - ❖ developing the Office Intranet site into a key information resource;
 - ❖ exploiting the Office's know-how;
 - ❖ circulating current awareness bulletins;
 - ❖ providing the appropriate information technology to support the library, know-how and information services and the dissemination of information generally throughout the Office.
- continue to promote and develop a culture within the Office as a whole of sharing knowledge and experience, including through:
 - ❖ having regular meetings to discuss legal issues of general interest;
 - ❖ regular communication and teamwork within specialist groups and divisions;
 - ❖ development of the know-how database;
 - ❖ current awareness bulletins;
 - ❖ in-house seminars.
- provide training and support to ensure that all staff are able to make full use of the Office's information systems;
- ensure that staff have the opportunity to avail of continuing legal and other relevant training and education;
- develop information technology systems that support these aims.

Progress Achieved

Merrion Street Library and Know-how Unit

- 4.1 The library and know-how areas in the Merrion Street Office have been merged into one unit. The primary role of the Library & Know-how Unit is the provision of integrated law library facilities and information and know-how services to the Attorney General, Advisory Counsel and Parliamentary Counsel.

The library's client base has grown and now includes other law offices of the State, departmental legal advisers, government librarians, civil servants and law libraries in other jurisdictions. Legal information queries and queries about the use of the Irish Statute Book CD-ROM/website from the general public are also dealt with.

- 4.2 The Unit is managed by a Law Librarian (Assistant Principal grade) and is staffed by an Assistant Librarian, Know-how Officer, Trainee Librarian and a Library Assistant (Clerical Officer). The Assistant Librarian, Trainee Librarian and Know-how Officer have been recruited on a contract basis. The Know-how Officer is a barrister and the Assistant Librarian and Trainee Librarian are professionally qualified librarians. These specialist staff are required on a permanent basis to ensure that an appropriate level of library and know-how services are provided to legal staff. There are ongoing discussions on this matter with the Department of Finance.

- 4.3 The Unicorn Library Management System was selected following a competitive tendering process and was installed in 1997-1998. This system was upgraded and implemented in the Chief State Solicitor's Office and the Law Reform Commission as a multi-library system during 2000. The multi-library system provides legal staff with access to the catalogues of the three libraries.

- 4.4 The Unit is responsible for the management and development of the know-how database. The know-how database was established in early 1999 and is being further developed by the current Know-how Officer and the Law Librarian. The know-how process is reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Know-how Officer to ensure that it meets the requirements of its primary users.
- 4.5 User services, provided by the Unit, include loans, inter-library loans, document delivery, current awareness bulletins, legal research and training on electronic legal information sources. The current awareness bulletins bring together contributions from library staff, the Know-how Officer and the Parliamentary Counsel Research Officer. The ongoing evaluation, selection and acquisition of legal resources in print and electronic format and the cataloguing/classification of these resources is undertaken by the Unit.
- 4.6 There is an emphasis on the desktop delivery of legal research tools. The know-how database, library catalogue, legal CD-ROMs and a range of other legal research tools are available on the desktops of legal staff. The Unit is responsible for the management and development of the legal information content on the office intranet which is available on every desktop. An increasing number of library and know-how resources and services are available via the intranet.
- 4.7 The library's resources include textbooks, journals, Irish unreported judgements, law reports, legislation, legal CD-ROMs, commercial online databases and the intranet/internet. The library also has subscriptions to the Trinity College Information Service and the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London. Other external libraries/information services, in Ireland and the UK, are used on a pay-as-we-use basis.
- 4.8 The librarians are active members of professional associations such as the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians and the Library Association of Ireland. The librarians attend relevant conferences and training sessions.

Chief State Solicitor's Office Library

- 4.9 The Chief State Solicitor's Office Library provides law library services to the legal staff of that Office. The library was established in March, 1999, following the appointment of a professional librarian.
- 4.10 The Library's primary clients include the staff of the Chief State Solicitor's Office located in Osmond House, South Fredrick Street (Army Deafness Section) and solicitors to the Criminal Assets Bureau (Harcourt Square). It also handles inquires from other Government Departments and solicitors to the Tribunals and State Solicitors. In total the Library offers direct support to approximately 130 legal staff.
- 4.11 The Library is currently managed by a Law Librarian and staffed by one Library Assistant (at Clerical Officer grade). The latter joined the library in June, 2000.
- 4.12 The IT Unit in the CSSO has worked closely with the Librarian in order to develop the library services to the highest level.
- 4.13 The Library offers a range of library/information services to legal staff - loans, inter-library loans, current awareness services, training, document delivery services and legal research. The Library's collection includes textbooks, legislation, journals, law reports, Irish unreported judgments, legal CD-ROMs and online commercial databases and the Internet. During 1999, a review of the existing collection was carried out and new stock (hard copy and electronic) were added.

The Library has access to, and back-up from, external library/information service providers including Trinity College Dublin Information Service, the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in London, Legal Information Resources (Sweet & Maxwell)

and the British Library. The Library can therefore draw on external sources to complement its own collections.

- 4.14 The Library has invested in desktop legal research tools for staff. Key legal CD-ROM titles have been networked across the Office. Some additional CD-ROM titles are available on a stand-alone basis in the Library. Additional online commercial legal research databases are also available to Library staff and CSSO personnel. The library catalogue will be made available to staff on their desktops during 2001. It is envisaged that many library resources and services will be made available via an intranet. The Library has invested in desktop legal research tools for staff. Key legal CD-ROM titles have been networked across the Office. The library catalogue will be made available to staff on their desktops during 2001. The Librarian is currently researching the use of Intranets in law offices with the view of using an Intranet as a way of offering library services and legal current awareness services to staff.

Some additional CD-ROM titles are available on a stand-alone basis in the Library. Additional online commercial legal research databases are also available to Library staff and CSSO personnel.

During 1999-2001, the Library provided current awareness services designed to keep legal staff up-to-date with legal/legislative developments and conference information.

- 4.15 During 2000, the Library installed an automated library system. The Unicorn Collection Management System, which was installed in the Attorney General's Office library in 1997 – 1998, was upgraded and implemented in the CSSO and the Law Reform Commission as a multi-library system during 2000. The multi-library system provides legal staff with access to the catalogues of the three libraries. As of February, 2001, the process of cataloguing the CSSO collection has begun and the collection will be classified according to the an established classification scheme for legal libraries, *Moys Classification and Thesaurus for Legal Materials*.

- 4.16 The IT Unit has provided facilities for the Librarian to conduct in house training courses on library applications. The Library ran a series of training sessions to staff over 2000. These training sessions were delivered by the Librarian and by external trainers and covered legal research CD-ROMs and Internet training. A training programme is also being planned for 2001. The Library has continued to run induction sessions for new staff. All of these programmes have received a positive response and were well attended.

The Library also held an information session on using libraries for legal research for clerical staff commencing the Diploma in Legal Studies in 2000/01.

- 4.17 The Librarian has completed an IMI Management course aimed at Managers in the CSSO. The Librarian has maintained contact with library professionals through membership of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians and various special interest groups of the Library Association of Ireland.

IT Unit in the Merrion Street Office

- 4.18 Given the reliance and increasing importance of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) to the functioning of the Office of the Attorney General, the Merrion Street IT Unit continued to provide a high level of service to staff of the Office. Most of the work management, information and research services and systems on which the Office depends are IT-based. The services provided by the Office's IT Unit ranged from the day-to-day Helpdesk requirements of staff to the on-going maintenance and enhancement of existing systems to the in-house development of a number of new bespoke systems to meet identified requirements in specific areas. Office-wide, a Library Management System, a system to allow network-based sharing of research CD-ROMs at the desktop, access to the Internet and an Office Intranet were implemented. The Office's website and Intranet were also further developed in line with user requirements.

The Office's preparation of its computer systems for the rollover to the Year 2000 entailed a detailed evaluation of all IT hardware and software systems and the identification and resolution of any issues arising. This work ensured a smooth rollover of IT systems to the New Year.

A number of in-house and external training courses on the IT systems available to the staff of the Office were arranged during 1999 and 2000. Feedback on the courses has been very positive and the Office will maintain its commitment to ensuring that staff are well-trained to make best possible use of the IT systems at their disposal. It is proposed to have a dedicated training room in place before the end of 2001, which will allow for more focused and systematic training to be developed

Members of the IT Unit are actively involved on a number of Government IT Committees and Working Groups.

IT Unit in the Chief State Solicitor's Office

- 4.19 The role of the IT Unit in assisting with the achievement of the aims of Key objective 4 has already been referred to in some of the preceding paragraphs. In general the IT Unit has continued to provide both in house and external training in all applications in use in the Office. Feedback on all these courses has been very positive.

The IT Unit has continued to provide a high level of support to all users ranging from day to day support to maintaining and developing systems to users requirements. A Clerical Officer was appointed to the IT Unit to deal with helpdesk calls.

All systems were examined and upgraded as necessary to ensure a smooth rollover to the Year 2000. Efforts are continuing to ensure a smooth transition to the Euro in 2002.

Stocks of PC's and printers are constantly monitored to ensure that equipment is available to cope with any new staff appointed to the Office. Contracts are kept in place to ensure availability.

Continuing Education

- 4.20 A Continuing Education Group was established by the Merrion Street Management Advisory Committee in March, 1998. The Group arranged on a monthly basis a series of seminars on a wide range of legal subjects designed to promote awareness of current developments in law and to enhance key skills such as time management and writing.

The seminars have ranged from a summary of an individual's experience on leave of absence, to an international conference. The content of the seminars organised by the Group has been determined by suggestions from Members of the Office and suggestions made by Members of the Group.

- 4.21 The Training and Development Committee in the Merrion Street Office will engage with the Human Resources Unit and develop all aspects of training and development. The Committee will work with the Training and Development Officer to enhance continued education possibilities.
- 4.22 An international conference on the theme of *Legislative Drafting – Emerging Trends* was hosted by the Merrion Street Office in Dublin Castle in October, 2000. The conference was opened by the Attorney General and papers were given by prominent legislative counsel from Ireland and abroad, leading academics and members of the judiciary.

- 4.23 An educational seminar was held on 18 May, 2000, dealing with the issue of **nuclear law**. This seminar was confined to the public service and was attended by lawyers from the Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office, members of staff of the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland, the Department of Public Enterprise, the Department of Marine and Natural Resources, the Department of the Environment and Local Government, the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Foreign Affairs (Legal Division).
- 4.24 A half-day seminar on key aspects of Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights was held on 2 April, 2001. It was addressed by Dr. Gerard Hogan, S.C., and attended by staff of the Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office. The seminar provided an introduction and practical guide to the Convention and its likely implications for the work of both offices. It is intended to have a follow-up seminar with a different perspective later in 2001.

Key Objective 5

To contribute to effective public service by encouraging and assisting in the co-ordination of the legal services of the State, the Office will in addition to those matters referred to in Key Objectives 1-4:

- support the Law Reform Commission in its key role in reviewing, examining and formulating proposals for law reform;
- support consultation and the development of effective relationships with other law offices and legal advisers;
- continue to contribute to the work of interdepartmental groups and other working groups and expert groups;
- continue to attend and contribute to the maximum extent to the Government Legislation Committee;
- explore the feasibility of the development of civil service-wide IT links to facilitate drafting of legislation;
- continue to provide indexes to the statutes and statutory instruments;
- continue to publish the statutes and statutory instruments on CD ROM and the Internet;
- continue to contribute to civil service, IPA and EU Commission training programmes;
- through the Legal Counsellor, continue to provide advice to the Permanent Representation in Brussels.

Progress achieved

Law Reform Commission

- 5.1 A Consultative Committee on Law Reform was established in March, 1998, to assist the Attorney General in his consultations with the Law Reform Commission about a new programme for law reform. It will also assist the Attorney in the selection of specific topics to be referred to the Commission and in monitoring progress on the implementation of the Hague, UNCITRAL and UNIDROIT Conventions. The Committee is chaired by the Merrion Street Office and includes representatives of key Government Departments, the Bar Council, the Law Society and the Law Reform Commission. The draft second programme for law reform was referred to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, approved by the Government and was published in February, 2001.
- 5.2 The Law Reform Commission is funded through a Grant-in-Aid from the Vote of the Merrion Street Office of the Office of the Attorney General. In 1998 the allocation to the Commission was increased to enable development of an IT systems and to meet costs associated with the move to new premises. The Office of the Attorney General completed the in-house development of a new website for the Commission which was launched in February, 2001. Access to the Office's electronic Library System has also been implemented for the Commission.

Law Offices Consultative Group

- 5.3 In its Report of June, 1997, the Review Group on the Law Offices of the State recommended the establishment, on a trial basis, of a consultative group among the Law Offices to facilitate communication, co-operation and co-ordination among the law offices and to provide a forum for discussion on issues of shared concern. The membership of the Committee comprises the Law Offices, the Revenue Solicitor, the Law Reform Commission and Legal Advisers in Government Departments. There continues to be a high level of business contact and meetings between relevant Law Offices on particular issues and this seems to be more appropriate at present.

Cross-Departmental Projects

- 5.4 The Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office have continued to be closely involved in cross-departmental projects and initiatives on a wide range of topics and listed in the Statement of Strategy. The Office has since become involved in new Groups, e.g. the Management Group for Judicial Review and Asylum cases.

Government Legislation Committee

- 5.5 The Merrion Street Office continues to participate in the work of the Government Legislation Committee and the Attorney General and officials from the Office attend weekly meetings of the Committee. This continued representation is extremely important to the functions performed by the Committee in relation to the prioritisation of the Government Legislation Programme and in assisting the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel in planning its work. .

e – Government Project and Electronic Statute Book

- 5.6 As part of its commitment to the e-Government initiative, the Merrion Street Office met with a number of other Government Offices to explore the feasibility of, and possible approaches to, making the legislative process more accessible. The Office intends to commence a joint project with the Houses of the Oireachtas during 2001, the scope of which will cover legislation drafting, parliamentary debate/consideration of legislation and the publication of legislation in electronic format on the web and CD-ROM.
- 5.7 The material available on Chronological Tables to the Statutes and Statutory Instruments covers the period 1922 to 1995. Steps are being taken to bring these up-to-date and to make them available on the website of the Office.

- 5.8 The Irish Statute Book, 1922-1998, containing the Acts of the Oireachtas, Statutory Instruments and Chronological Tables, was made available on CD-ROM in late 1999. The CD may be purchased from the Government Publications Sales. In 2000, the Electronic Statute Book was converted into a format suitable for hosting on the internet and was published on the Office's web site in September, 2000. A request for tender to update the Electronic Statute Book to include 1999 and 2000 material issued in April, 2001, and tenders are being received in advance of the closing date of 6 June, 2001.

Development of effective relationships with other law offices

- 5.9 The Merrion Street Office and the Chief State Solicitor's Office continue to support consultation and the development of effective working relations with other law offices and legal advisers. In the development of the Corrib Gas Field Resource, specialist legal expertise from a private firm of solicitors was retained to assist the Office in advising the relevant Department and drafting relevant documentation. Separately, in a large commercial case with international dimensions, another private firm of solicitors was instructed and retained. The CSSO held regular meetings with lawyers from both the Office and the firm and officials from the relevant Department in attendance. In another case involving extra-territorial litigation relating to breaches of State copyright a firm of UK solicitors was instructed and retained. Also, the CSSO instructed specialist counsel from overseas in Ireland's objection to a planning application in another jurisdiction.

Contribution to outside training programmes

- 5.10 The CSSO hosted a seminar to Prison Governors and Assistant Prison Governors on the preparation of personal injury cases and discovery principles and practices as part of the Irish Prisons Service Training Programme. Also, the CSSO hosted a workshop

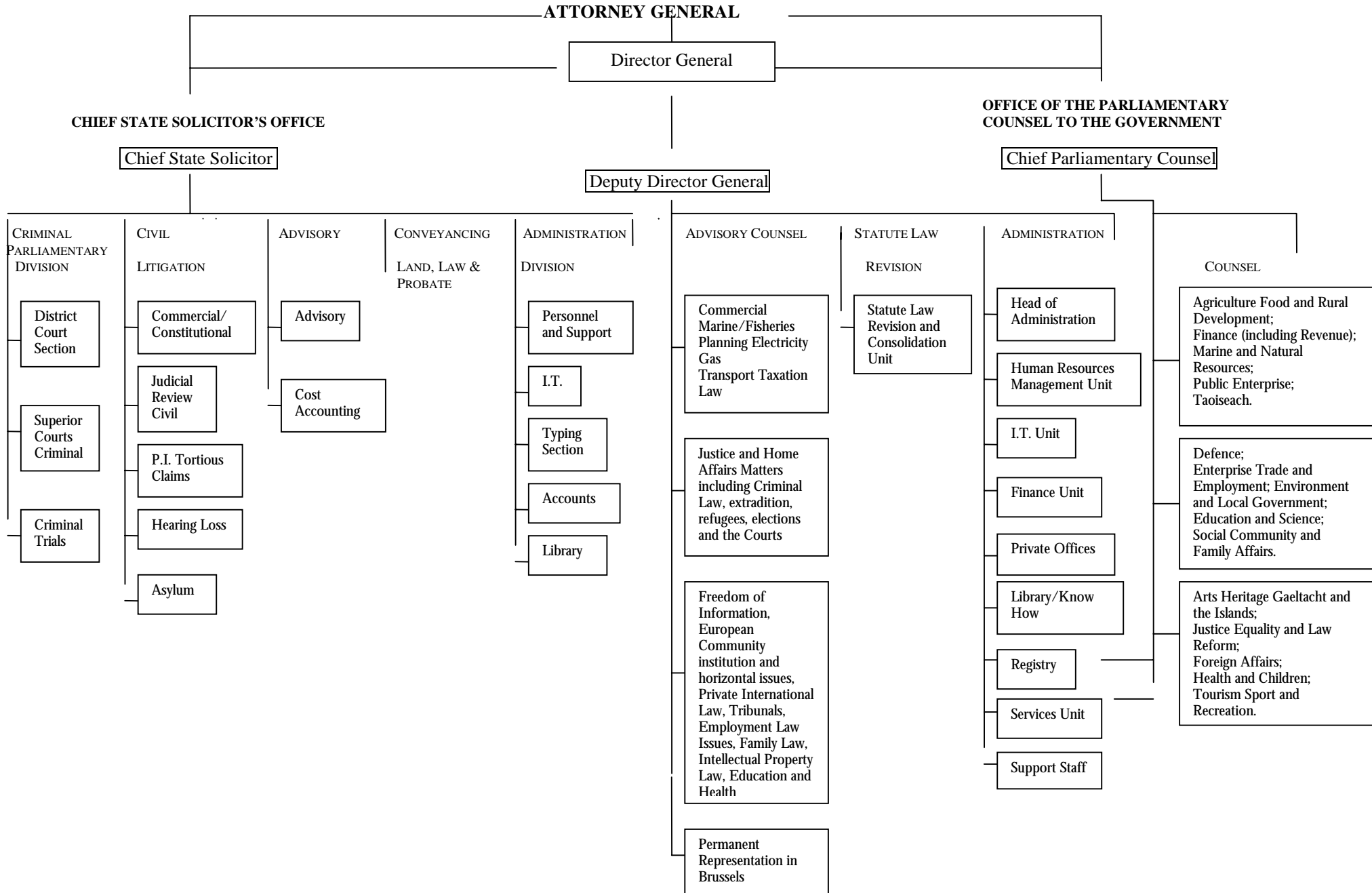
on Managing Protected Structures under Planning and Development Legislation. This workshop was organised mainly for personnel from the Office of Public Works and the Department of Defence. The Office also co-hosted Conveyancing Law seminars with a number of Government Departments.

5.11 The Merrion Street Office is frequently requested by the European Commission and the Institute of Public Administration to participate in the training programmes for the Accession States.

5.12. A member of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Government gave a lecture on the procedures used to transpose European Union Directives for

- a series of workshops organised by the EU Commission in Cyprus in May, 2000,
- a seminar organised by the Polish Parliament on “Parliamentary Legislative Services and Approximation of Laws” in Warsaw in June, 2000, and
- a “Training Programme in European Affairs for Central and East European Diplomats” organised by the Institute of Public Administration (co-funded by the EU Commission and the Department of Foreign Affairs on 27 October, 2000, for civil servants from the Accession Countries (on Adoption of Member States to EU Legal System).

APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2

Office of the Attorney General Merrion Street Office

Expenditure for the Years 1999 and 2000 and Estimate provision for 2001

	1999 Outturn £'000	2000 Outturn £'000	2001 Estimate £'000
Administration			
Salaries, Wages & Allowances	2,650	3,035	4,698
Travel and Subsistence	149	147	195
Incidental Expenses	286	396	503
Postal & Telecommunication Services	53	65	109
Office Machinery & Office Supplies	335	324	404
Office Premises Expenses	81	147	219
Consultancy Services	468	271	1,139
Total Administration	4,022	4,385	7,267
Other Services			
Contributions to International Organisations	13	54	30
Law Reform Commission (Grant-in-Aid)	868	906	1,007
General Law Expenses	129	66	120
Gross Total	5,032	5,411	8,424
Less Appropriations-in-Aid	17	17	10
Net Total	5,015	5,394	8,414

Chief State Solicitor's Office

Expenditure for the Years 1999 and 2000 and Estimate provision for 2001

	1999	2000	2001
	Outturn £'000	Outturn £'000	Estimate £'000
Administration			
Salaries, Wages & Allowances	8,474	8,022	10,163
Travel and Subsistence	39	110	152
Incidental Expenses	301	468	533
Postal & Telecommunication Services	251	234	353
Office Machinery & Office Supplies	380	410	593
Office Premises Expenses	136	58	236
Consultancy Services	17	35	135
Total Administration	9,598	9,337	12,165
Other Services			
Fees to Counsel	6,257	5,198	6,500
General Law Expenses	3,525	2,624	4,000
Gross Total	19,380	17,159	22,665
Less Appropriations-in-Aid	861	434	147
Net Total	18,519	16,725	22,518

APPENDIX 3

Report of Payment Practices for 1998 and 1999

Office of the Attorney General, Merrion Street

General

1. All relevant payments made on behalf of this Office by our paying agent, the Department of Finance Accounts Branch, comply with the terms of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997. It should be noted that the Act does not apply to payments in respect of legal fees.

Late Payments

2. Payments totalling £5.1 million in 1998 and £5 million in 1999 were made from the Office of the Attorney General's Vote. Payments totalling £1.8million in 1998 and £1.4 million in 1999 were in respect of payments to which the Act applies. There were no late payments made during 1998 and 1999.

Statement of Compliance with the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997

All relevant payments made by the Office of the Attorney General complied with the terms of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997.

Guidelines put in place to ensure compliance with the Act were circulated to all staff in January, 1998. The aim of these guidelines is to facilitate prompt clearance of invoices and prevent interest penalties arising. Furthermore, financial procedures in place in the Office are regularly monitored and reviewed including procedures to ensure compliance with the Act.

CHIEF STATE SOLICITOR'S OFFICE

Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997

Report of Payment Practices and Statistics for 1999

The CSSO has computerised systems in place that are designed to monitor and control compliance with the terms of the Act.

Generally, payments fall due on expiry of the statutory 45 days. Where shorter periods are specified on invoices, this requirement is complied with. In the small proportion of cases where payments are not made within the statutory period, the appropriate interest payments are made.

Two categories of suppliers of services to the CSSO do not come within the scope of the Act. Counsels' fees are excluded on the basis of legal advice. Payments to solicitors engaged by people involved in litigation against the State where costs are awarded to the plaintiff are covered by the Courts Act, 1981 which has its own interest payment provisions.

Statistics - Period January to December 1999

Total value of all payments	£3,804,336
Total value of all late payments <i>(Under £250 inclusive)</i>	£156,459
Value of late payments in excess of £250	£120,033
Value of late payments as % of total payments	4.11%
Number of late payments in excess of £250	72
Amount of interest paid	£2,145
Amount of interest as a % of total payments	0.056 %

Broad indication of length of delays
(Invoices in excess of £250)

43 days