

Office of the Ombudsman | Standards in Public Office Commission | Office of the Information Commissioner
Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information | Commission for Public Service Appointments
Referendum Commission | Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner

STRATEGY 2025



**STRATEGY
2025**

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Foreword

I am pleased to welcome this Statement of Strategy as Ombudsman, Information Commissioner and as a member of the SIPO and CPSA Commissions. In this, I am grateful and honoured to have the full support of the CPSA and its Chair, Ceann Comhairle, Seán Ó Feargháil, and SIPO and its Chair, Mr Justice Garrett Sheehan.

This Statement of Strategy (Statement) sets out our key objectives to 2025. The Statement has been developed in consultation with our external stakeholders and with staff from each of the individual Offices and Business Units.

The post-Covid pandemic world will be different from before both in terms of the work environment and how we deliver our services. The Office has already invested significant time and resources into transforming the way that we work in order to be innovative and optimise the use of our resources and of course to respond to the challenges created by Covid. The Office will continue to seek to promote resilience by embracing new methods of working, especially through innovations in digital technology, to better engage with the public. This Statement builds upon our achievements and will help us to continue to innovate and deliver on a number of significant projects over the next three and a half years.

The Statement has a clear vision for the Office. There are six overriding strategic themes. Each of these strategic themes is underpinned by separate but linked strategic objectives for each individual office and are supported by our shared services strategic objectives. The Statement is also sufficiently flexible to allow us to deal with any organisational changes or changes in the external environment arising. As such, the Office will keep the Statement under review and update it as necessary.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ger Deering', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ger Deering

Ombudsman and Information Commissioner



As Chairperson of the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA), I welcome the inclusion of the Commission in an overarching strategy statement, encompassing the different independent regulatory Offices under the corporate support of the Office of the Ombudsman. This consistent approach aligns all of these offices in the common objective of promoting, encouraging and exemplifying excellence in Public Service. It will allow these offices to continue to support the wider Public Service in reaching our shared goals. I look forward to the CPSA contributing to the delivery of this strategy.



Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD

Ceann Comhairle

Chairperson of the Commission for Public Service Appointments

As Chairperson of the Standards in Public Office Commission, I welcome the inclusion of the Standards Commission Secretariat in this Statement of Strategy. I am pleased that the Statement recognises both the shared values and the independence of the different regulatory Offices under the corporate support of the Office of the Ombudsman. Our shared objectives will help improve public services and transparency in public life, the latter of which is a key objective of the legislation the Standards Commission supervises. I look forward to the Standards Commission contributing to the delivery of this strategy.



Mr Justice Garrett Sheehan

Chairperson of the Standards in Public Office Commission

The Office – stronger and better together

Our Office is an unusual one, comprising six (soon to be seven) different statutory functions.

In order to prepare a strategy which supports and respects the functional independence of each body, we have taken the approach of starting with an identification of what unites us as an overall organisation. Over the last number of months, we have met staff to discuss our common vision, culture and goals. Through this series of workshops, we sought to get everyone's views, and it was heartening to hear that we are clear and united on our goal of driving fairness, accountability and transparency in the delivery of public services. Our country and many of our institutions are celebrating a decade of centenaries and so it is timely that we reflect on how we can contribute. Through the work of the Ombudsman and CPSA, we hope that we contribute to improving standards in public services and through the work of the Information Commissioner and the SIPO Commission, we hope that we contribute to the upholding of the democratic process.

We are proud of our common "Vision and Values" and we used these to create a series of common "Strategic Themes". As these themes cover seven offices, they are necessarily high level. As an office, we are all influenced by internal and external factors and we have worked together to consider how they will impact us over the next few years. These are covered in our section called "Strategic Influences". A key influence for us is our public sector duty in relation to human rights and equality. During the life of this strategy, we will seek ways to ensure we apply a human rights lens in all our work and in particular we will use our influence as the Office of the Ombudsman to encourage other public bodies to do so also.

We are all supported in our work by our colleagues in the "Corporate Spine" of our organisation, who give us expertise and specialist support in a range of technical areas, which might not be available to the smaller individual body working alone. We are very careful to ensure that all the casework, decision-making and personal data collected through each element of our functions is kept separate and is accessed only by staff working in that area. In relation to the general administration of the Office however, we work together. We share office space, ICT staff and systems, legal & HR support as well as procurement and finance staff. This approach gives us functional independence in all our core work, but allows us to realise the benefits and economies of scale of working for a larger organisation. Our staff, who are independent civil servants of the State have better resources at their disposal, and better career opportunities as part of a bigger Office.

Some of our corporate objectives may be published as separate documents. In particular, we will have a detailed and comprehensive ICT strategy to support this overall strategy. Indeed, ICT will be a major focus for us in the next two strategic cycles. We have an ambitious digital agenda, which our staff are highly motivated to achieve. We have been well supported by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and the Oireachtas in relation to our budget and we have



sufficient funds to achieve our ambitions. However, we have challenges in recruiting additional staff with the requisite ICT skills and positions lie vacant for long periods. Therefore, while we want to achieve our ICT goals by 2025, realistically, many of the objectives for 2025 will consist of groundwork for changes and improvements which will only be fully realised in the following strategic cycle.

As an Office consisting of several different statutory offices and functions, we have much in common and the general themes and framework are covered in sections 1 through 5. Each of our statutory organisation differs however in relation to its unique business objectives. For this reason, we have created specific objectives for each statutory organisation, each of which should be read in the context of the overall framework. They are found in section 6 of this document. Section 7 covers the objectives of our Corporate Spine. Section 8 sets out our Commitments in relation to Innovation, Human Rights and the Environment. This Statement will be backed up by detailed annual business plans for each of the different offices and business units. These annual business plans will be reviewed for progress on a quarterly basis.

In preparing this Statement, we had many lively and interesting discussions among management and staff and the result is all the better for it. In particular, our staff decided to make some changes in relation to expressing our values, as we feel these better represent who we are, and what we stand for. I look forward to our offices working together over the next three and a half years to deliver on these commitments we have made to each other, to our Ombudsman and Commissioners and most importantly to the public who we serve.



Elaine Cassidy

Director General

1. Background and Introduction

Throughout this document references will be to “the Office” Statement of Strategy. “The Office” collectively refers to the individual statutory bodies listed below.

- Office of the Ombudsman [OTO]
- Standards in Public Office Commission [SIPO]
- Office of the Information Commissioner [OIC]
- Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information [OCEI]
- Commission for Public Service Appointments [CPSA]
- Referendum Commission whenever established
- Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner (when established) [OPDC]

While the different Offices each carry out separate and distinct statutory functions, the Office functions as a single amalgamated agency in organisational terms. The Office is funded by one Vote and overseen by an Accounting Officer (Director General) who is supported by a Management Advisory Committee (MAC). In carrying out their work our staff embrace the traditional obligations of privacy and integrity in the performance of official duties while at the same time protecting and preserving the statutory independence and functions of each of the constituent offices in which they work.

We share a common vision. The central themes of the Offices' Vision Statement are of fostering transparency, increasing accountability and improving accessibility and inclusivity of services in the public sector. Our focus is on extending the impact of our Office on the wider public service, on continuously improving the level of services we provide, and ensuring that our systems and processes allow us to deliver on those objectives. In order to successfully deliver on our Vision, we promote a positive culture of ethical behaviour and effective governance.

In light of the sharing of staff and other resources across the Offices, this Statement of Strategy applies to the secretariats to SIPO and the CPSA . These bodies are both headed by an independent Commission Chair and Commission members (and they both count the Ombudsman among their members). As members of our Office staff, the Secretariats share the vision and values of our Office. While the Commissioners themselves are fully independent in their statutory functions, they are supportive of their secretariats taking part in the identification of objectives, values and improvements, which will support them in their work and bring benefits to the wider public.



The Office also provides a Secretariat to the Referendum Commission. Once a referendum is called the Office assigns staff temporarily, from within its existing resources, to assist the Referendum Commission in carrying out its functions. The Office also ensures that external services necessary for the Referendum Commission to carry out its functions are procured in accordance with Government guidelines. The current Programme for Government provides for the establishment of an Electoral Commission. It is anticipated that an Electoral Commission will be established in 2022. Once established the functions of the Referendum Commission will transfer to the Electoral Commission. We have not, therefore, set objectives for the Referendum Commission in our Strategy Statement. Our Office will, however, co-operate and assist to ensure a smooth transfer of functions to an Electoral Commission.

In line with the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Bill 2022, it is expected that the OPDC will also be established during 2022. We considered this during the preparation of this strategy statement and decided that our vision, values and strategic themes fit well with this new Commissioner role. Indeed, we note that in many other countries around the world, the office of Ombudsman carries responsibility for the promotion of ethics and confidential disclosures in addition to the familiar role of reviewing maladministration complaints against public bodies.

We have consulted widely, both internally and externally, in preparing our Statement of Strategy. We launched an external consultation process at the end of July 2021 which remained open until 17th September. The consultation document was available on the Office websites and was circulated to our key stakeholders for input. We had further follow-up with a number of bodies whom we considered might usefully contribute to the development of our Statement of Strategy.

Internally our MAC were engaged throughout the development of the Statement of strategy. We also held consultation sessions with all of our staff in order to inform and shape the direction of the strategic plan and our high level objectives. These sessions were led by our Senior Managers and they developed ideas and content for each of the individual offices' / units' strategic objectives. The process reinforced employee engagement with the strategic planning process and informed a re-assessment of our vision, our organisational culture and our values; the consideration of our key strategic influences; and the development of our shared strategic themes.

2. Our Vision

Our vision is to drive *fairness, transparency* and *accountability* in the delivery of public services.

3. Our Values

We have met with all of our staff to discuss and review our organisational values. We discussed the difference between aspirational values and those which reflect our core culture. We also discussed how and why the values are shared across each of the offices. Following these discussions, we believe the following reflects the values and culture of our office:

Independence

Our staff are independent civil servants of the State. Independence is part of our culture. We work hard to respect and ensure a functional independence in all our core work and to promote a positive culture of ethical behaviour and effective governance. The Venice Principles are cited below as one of our key influences. While the Venice Principles are concerned with the establishment of independent and impartial ombudsman institutions we believe that their principles of independence apply equally to all of our offices. We are committed to continuing to ensure practical and demonstrable independence in the exercise of statutory functions across all statutory offices. We will, therefore, ensure that we examine complaints, conduct reviews, and support the making of decisions in a fair, objective, and impartial manner.

Customer Focus

We aim for excellence and professionalism in the delivery of our services. We strive to be an outward-facing/customer centric organisation and to provide an accessible, efficient and effective service to our customers – which includes members of the public and the public bodies we work with. Our work often brings us into contact with some of the most marginalised members of our society. It is important and part of our culture, therefore, to show understanding and empathy in such cases while at the same time recognising that fairness (including fairness in our dealings with public bodies) is also one of our values. We will strive to meet defined quality standards and continuously review our performance to ensure that our customers remain at the heart of everything we do.



The Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030 is cited below as one of our key influences. One of the three pillars of the Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030 is harnessing digital technology and innovation. Our office will continue to leverage digital technology in the way we work and to adopt a customer-driven service design to ensure digital solutions are shaped by the needs and wants of our public. It is, however, recognised that some of our service users will still prefer to engage in services offline and we will continue to support such requirements. Our aim is to ensure that those who wish to access our services can do so when they need them, in the way that suits them best.

Fairness

Treating people fairly is fundamental to our relationships with all of our stakeholders. This applies equally to our public and to the public bodies we work with. Fairness also contributes to a healthy work environment that promotes engagement, openness and transparency. We will aim to be consistent in our approach and our decision-making to ensure that our customers and the public bodies we work with will know what to expect from us. We will aim to be effective in the delivery of our services. In order to achieve consistency and effectiveness in our responses and decisions we will ensure that they are grounded in high quality evidence. To do this we will listen carefully to our customers and the public bodies we deal with and we will make impartial and fair decisions based on relevant evidence.

Respect

Our work often brings us into contact with some of the most marginalised members of society. Often our customers avail of our services having exhausted all other avenues open to them. Treating all people with respect and dignity, therefore, is the cornerstone of our culture. We will listen carefully to our customers and public service providers with a view to understanding their concerns and positions. We will seek to ensure that our Office and our staff are also treated with respect as well. We are committed to diversity and we will respect all individuals and value their contribution.

Integrity

In our work we promote a positive culture of openness, transparency, ethical behaviour and effective governance. Our culture is to uphold the highest ethical standards and to act with honesty and integrity. We are transparent, open and truthful in how we deliver our services. We will continue to deliver our services in an unbiased, transparent and professional manner. We will respect the sensitivity of the information which we receive and we will protect any information provided to our Office by our customers and by public service providers.

4. Our Shared Strategic Themes

1. Improve public services

Actively engage with our stakeholders to drive improvement in the quality of those public services within our remit and to ensure better administration and delivery of public services.

2. Improve transparency in public life

Seek to ensure that proper standards of integrity, conduct and concern for the public interest underpin the delivery of public services. Seek also to ensure that the public have access to comprehensive and timely information about how decisions regarding public policy and services are being made.

3. Achieve greater openness and inclusivity in access to public services

Work with our stakeholders to utilise diverse methods of communication and engagement to ensure better knowledge of, and access to, public services and encourage a greater focus on working with people from disadvantaged groups or marginalised communities who are often most in need of public services.

4. Innovate, streamline and improve how we handle all our customer interactions

We will regularly review our work processes to ensure that they are as effective as possible and that we are benefiting from any innovation or technology which could improve our work. In particular, we will improve our digital offering by making more services available online.

5. Develop an agile and responsive staff

We will continue to learn and improve by being open to external ideas and re-imagine our workplace to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by new and emerging technologies to provide our staff with the opportunity to fulfil their potential and provide excellent public services in a rewarding, supportive and flexible working environment.

6. Secure and modernise our systems to 2025 and beyond

We will prepare to move to a predominately cloud-based solution/service and we will develop and implement a long-term sustainable resourcing model for our ICT services. This objective will have a cross-cutting influence on many of the specific objectives in each office.



5. Key Strategic Influences

We are mindful of a suite of national and international strategies which have a bearing on our role as a public service body. Our strategic plan is influenced by and purposefully aligned to the key influences below. Our staff and our management advisory committee have met and considered how these initiatives will change the world around us during the life of Strategy 2025. Each of our business areas have considered how these initiatives will impact on their work and they have woven them into the design of their specific strategic objectives.

1. Views of our stakeholders

We launched an external consultation process at the end of July 2021. The consultation document was available on each of the Office websites and was circulated to our key stakeholders for input. Additionally, we directly contacted and followed up with a number of bodies whom we considered might usefully contribute to the development our Statement of Strategy. We thank the organisations and individuals who contributed. We note that the response rate was quite low however, and we believe that many organisations were focussed on core activities only during Covid and may not have had the capacity to respond. [A report on the external consultation process](#) with details of the bodies who provided input is available on the Office websites.

2. The views of our staff, the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, and the post pandemic future of work



The [Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey \(CSEES\)](#) is an important initiative under the Strategy for Civil Service Renewal (below). The purpose of the Survey is to measure and evaluate employee engagement, well-being, coping with change and commitment to the organisation. The results from our Office are benchmarked against results for the Civil Service as a whole. We are delighted that the survey shows how engaged our staff are and how committed they are to serving the public. The Office is fully committed to identifying and putting steps in place to address any areas identified in the CSEES where improvements can be made.

The experience of COVID 19 confirmed the viability and effectiveness of blended working models. The Civil Service Management Board has produced [an overall policy statement](#) to guide individual offices in the development of tailored and appropriate policies for blended working. Working within the framework of the overall Civil Service policy our Office will develop a blended working policy which will be tailored to our business needs and will ensure a consistency and continuity of our services to the public. Our policy will continue to evolve to reflect the impact of new ways of working within the Civil Service and to ensure that we continue to provide a high quality service.

3. Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030



The Government has recently launched a new ten-year Civil Service Renewal Strategy ([Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy 'Building on our Strengths'](#)). This Strategy document will drive reform for the Civil Service and will be implemented through a series of 3-year action plans. The Strategy is centred on three core pillars:

1. Delivering evidence-informed policy and services.
2. Harnessing digital technology and innovation.
3. Building the Civil Service workforce, workplace and organisation of the future.

As our Office is staffed by Civil Servants of the State we will ensure that in line with the Civil Service Renewal Strategy our workforce remains agile and responsive to challenges that lie ahead. We intend to promote a positive workplace culture that aligns with Civil Service values; that embraces a culture of innovation, exploration and adoption of new approaches; and which affords our staff the opportunity to fulfil their potential in a rewarding, supportive and flexible working environment.

4. UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



In September 2015, UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The [17 UN SDGs](#) are the UN blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address global challenges including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. The 2030 Agenda encourages countries to integrate the SDGs into planning and policy, on both a national and international level.

[UN SDG 16](#) is particularly relevant to our Office as it relates to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provision of access to justice for all; building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms. We believe, given the mandates of our individual offices, and the role we play in remedying injustice and mediating between citizens and the public bodies under our remit, that our Office is well placed to contribute to achieving UN SDG 16 targets.



5. Public Sector Duty

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 introduced a positive duty ([Public Sector Duty](#)) on public bodies to have due regard to human rights and equality issues.



Section 42(1) of the Act requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination; promote equality and protect human rights of staff and people availing of their services; and protect the human rights of staff and services. Section 42(2) of the Act requires public bodies to assess, address and report on progress in relation to equality and human rights in their strategic plans and annual reports in a manner that is accessible to the public. Our staff are committed to showing leadership in this area, and therefore meeting our Public Sector Duty requirements will be a key influence on delivering our strategic plan.

6. Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act

The [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015](#), and its 2021 amending Act, together provide the framework for Ireland to meet its international and EU climate commitments and commits the Government to moving to a climate-resilient and climate-neutral economy by the end of 2050. Public Bodies will be obliged to take account of Climate Action Plans in the performance of their functions. Our Office has established a “Green Team” to focus on our use of energy, plastics, waste, transport, water, and plant life. Our Green Team has created a mini-strategy to identify the policies, plans and actions needed over the course of this Statement of Strategy to meet our requirements under the Climate Action Plan.



7. Open Data Requirements

The concept of open data is about making data held by public service bodies available and easily accessible online, for re-use and re-distribution. DPER has responsibility for Ireland’s open data policy. DPER published an [Open Data Strategy for 2017-2022](#) in July 2017. Underpinning the publication of open data is a technical framework that provides a clear set of requirements for public bodies to ensure that published datasets meet clearly defined standards and are published in a consistent way that makes them more discoverable, accessible, and reusable. We will ensure that our own Office works over the next three years to make its data available in accordance with the Open Data Strategy. This will mean reviewing how we collect, store and publish our data. It is likely to require some fundamental changes to our systems and it will be a key strategic objective for all business areas, as well as our ICT Unit.





8. The Venice Principles and UN resolution

The Venice Principles ([“Principles on the protection and promotion of the institution of the Ombudsman”](#)) represent an independent, international set of standards to protect and promote the Ombudsman institution. The United Nations 2020 strong endorsement of the Venice Principles establishes these principles as the new global standard for the Ombudsman.

While the Venice Principles are concerned with the establishment of independent and impartial Ombudsman institutions, we believe that their principles of independence apply equally to all of our offices, as the role of Ombudsman internationally can cover a variety of areas, including human rights, anti-corruption and transparency. The principles also require offices with a broad remit such as ours to have a structural flexibility which assists us to staff different areas optimally during particular pressure points. We will ensure that in our day-to-day work and in our interaction with the legislative process, we will uphold the Venice Principles.

9. OGCIO Public Service Strategy



The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) carries out a leadership role for the digital agenda across Government. OGCIO works in collaboration with organisations across the Civil and Public Service and has growing involvement in supporting sectoral digital development. [OGCIO Public Service ICT Strategy](#) has five pillars, which are, Build to Share; Digital First; Data as an Enabler; Improve Governance; Increase Capability.

Over the period to end 2025, we will ensure that our ICT structures provide for a secure, robust and sustainable model by aligning (insofar as is possible) with OGCIO Public Service ICT Strategies and by working closely with OGCIO in ensuring our systems remain secure and resilient into the future.

10. Open Government Partnership



The [Open Government Partnership](#) (OGP) is a multilateral initiative currently comprising 79 countries that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Programme for Government (2020) has a commitment to “continue and re-invigorate participation by the public sector in Open Government Partnership”. The [third Open Government Partnership National Action Plan](#) includes commitments for a Review of Ireland’s Statutory Framework for Ethics in Public Life; a Review of Ireland’s Freedom of Information Regime; and a Review of the Operation of the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015. There is also a Programme for Government commitment to extend the scope of the Regulation of Lobbying Act to certain other Designated Public Officials.



11. Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee (ACCC)



The Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee (ACCC) made [a number of findings against Ireland for non-Compliance with the Aarhus Convention](#). Some of these findings relate to the operation of the OCEI, particularly the timeliness of appeals before the Commissioner. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications has commenced a review of the AIE Regulations. The OCEI welcomes this review and is committed to implementing the requisite changes to its systems and procedures in order to improve its timeframes.

6. Individual Offices Key 3-year objectives

Individual Offices and Business Units have now identified their own key strategic objectives during the life of Strategy 2025. These strategic objectives are underpinned by the six high level strategic themes set out in section 4 above and influenced by the wider initiatives set out at section 5 above. This approach reflects the fact that we are staffed and resourced as a single amalgamated organisation while facilitating the individuality of each statutory office function.



Ombudsman









Office of the Ombudsman (OTO) key strategic objectives









Established under the Ombudsman Act, 1980, the core activity of the OTO is the examination and investigation of complaints about administrative actions, delays, or inaction adversely affecting persons or bodies in their dealings with public service providers under remit. OTO also investigates complaints relating to certain functions of public bodies covered by the Disability Act, 2005.

If the Ombudsman finds in any given case that the complainant has been treated unfairly or improperly and has been adversely affected as a result, then he will suggest an appropriate redress to remedy, mitigate or alter the adverse effect suffered. In dealing with and resolving individual complaints the Ombudsman works to bring about improvements in administration based on lessons learned from individual complaints or from own initiative investigations.




Ombudsman

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences	OTO Objectives
<p>Improve public services</p>	 The Venice Principles  UNCRPD  Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030	<p>Objective 1 - Deliver at least 1 systemic investigation, special or themed report each year.</p> <p>Objective 2 - Pursue implementation of systemic investigations.</p>
<p>Improve transparency and accountability in public life</p>	 Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030  CSEES and views of our staff <p>Views of our stakeholders</p>  UN Sustainable Development Goal 16	<p>Objective 3 – Share best practice with a view to improving consistency of decision making and complaint handling by public bodies.</p> <p>Objective 4 – Develop a structured engagement with public bodies so that complaints made to the Ombudsman are given due attention and recommendations by the Ombudsman are implemented.</p> <p>Objective 5 – Drive the appropriate expansion of the Ombudsman remit and build our capacity and resources to meet the requirements for such expansions.</p>
<p>Achieve an open, inclusive, fair access and fairness in delivery of public services</p>	 Public sector duty <p>Views of our stakeholders</p>  UN Sustainable Development Goal 16	<p>Objective 6 – Develop a human rights approach for examining complaints in line with Public Sector Duty.</p> <p>Objective 7 – Further develop awareness of the Office through effective and targeted outreach among minority and specific interest groups and nationwide.</p>

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences	OTO Objectives
<p>Improve the timeliness and effectiveness of our delivery of services</p>	<p> Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p> <p> CSEES and views of our staff</p>	<p>Objective 8 – Improve case handling procedures.</p> <p>Objective 9 – Implement measures to improve timeliness of investigations and quality of our decisions.</p> <p>Objective 10 – Create a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on our recommendations to public bodies.</p>
<p>Improve public services Develop an agile and responsive staff in line with CSRS 2030</p>	<p> UN Sustainable Development Goal 16</p> <p> CSEES and views of staff</p> <p> CSRS 2030 DPER Policy on Blended Working</p>	<p>Objective 11 - Provide improved in-house supports and development opportunities to facilitate recruitment and retention of OTO Staff.</p> <p>Objective 12 - Critically review induction and training documentation and requirements using the experience of staff recently appointed to the OTO.</p>
<p>ICT Modernisation</p>	<p> Open Data Requirements</p> <p> OGCI0 Public Service Strategy</p> <p> Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p>	<p>Objective 13 – Provide safe and accessible mechanisms for members of the public to access our services</p> <p>Objective 14 – Provide secure online mechanisms for public bodies to share information</p> <p>Objective 15 – Review and refine CRM to meet evolving business needs and open data requirements</p> <p>Objective 16 - Complete the development of the Knowledge Management Database</p>



An Coimisinéir Faisnéise Information Commissioner

Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) key strategic objectives







Originally established under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 1997 and continued under the FOI Act 2014, the role of the Information Commissioner is to review decisions made by public bodies in relation to FOI requests and to make binding new decisions. The Commissioner's role is also to keep the operation of the Act under review with a view to ensuring maximum compliance among public bodies and to prepare and publish commentaries on the practical operation of the Act.

The European Communities (Re-use of Public Sector Information) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 525 of 2015) provide that the Information Commissioner is designated as the Appeal Commissioner. As such, the Commissioner can review decisions taken by public bodies in relation to requests made under the Regulations to re-use public sector information, including decisions on fees and conditions imposed on re-use of such information.

Since the introduction of the 2014 Act, OIC has noted a marked increase in demand for its services. In 2014, OIC accepted 252 applications for review. By 2020 (a year that was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic) that figure had risen to 434. In 2021 OIC accepted in excess of 500 applications for review, double the number of applications it had received before the 2014 Act came into force. The ongoing increasing demand for our services is a key influence for our Strategic Objectives.



An Coimisinéir Faisnéise
Information Commissioner

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences		OIC Objectives
<p>Improve public services</p> <p>Improve transparency in public life</p> <p>Achieve greater openness and inclusivity in access to public services</p>		<p>Review of FOI Act by DPER</p>	<p>Objective 1 – Deliver timely, accurate, and well-grounded decisions on reviews</p> <p>Objective 2 - Ensure OIC is centrally involved in the review process being carried out by the DPER</p> <p>Objective 3 - Ensure OIC's views & recommendations are heard with a view to being reflected in the FOI review</p>
<p>Improve public services</p> <p>Improve transparency in public life</p> <p>Achieve greater openness and inclusivity in access to public services</p>	 	<p>Views of our stakeholders</p> <p>UN Sustainable Development Goal 16</p> <p>Open Government Partnership</p>	<p>Objective 4 – OIC will re-establish a comprehensive outreach programme to engage with public bodies to drive improvements in the delivery of FOI services</p>
<p>Develop an agile and responsive staff in line with CSRS 2030</p>	  	<p>Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p> <p>CSEES and views of our staff</p> <p>DPER Policy on Blended Working</p>	<p>Objective 5 – Provide improved in-house supports and development opportunities to facilitate recruitment and retention of OIC Staff</p> <p>Objective 6 - Critically review induction and training documentation and requirements using the experience of staff recently appointed to OIC</p>



Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences	OIC Objectives
ICT Modernisation	 Open Data Requirements  OGCIO Public Service Strategy  Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030	<p>Objective 7 – Improve and modernise the OIC Knowledge Management Database</p> <p>Objective 8 – In conjunction with ICT provide safe and accessible mechanisms for members of the public to access our services</p> <p>Objective 9 – In conjunction with ICT provide a secure online mechanism for public bodies to share information</p> <p>Objective 10 – Review and refine CRM to meet evolving business needs and open data requirements</p>



Coimisinéir um Fhaisnéis Comhshaoil Commissioner for Environmental Information













Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information (OCEI) key strategic objectives

The European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2018 provide an additional means of access for people to environmental information. The right of access under the AIE Regulations applies to environmental information held by or for a public authority. The primary role of the Commissioner is to review decisions taken by public authorities on requests for environmental information.

The roles of Information Commissioner and Commissioner for Environmental Information are legally independent of each other as are the access to information regimes under the respective legislation.



Coimisinéir um Fhaisnéis Comhshaoil
Commissioner for Environmental Information

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences	OCEI Objectives
Improve transparency in public life	 ACCC findings  UN Sustainable Development Goal 16  Venice Principles Views of our stakeholders	Objective 1 – Take measures to improve the timeliness of OCEI processes and decision making Objective 2 – Deliver accurate, clear and well-grounded decisions on appeals to the OCEI
Improve transparency in public life	 UN Sustainable Development Goal 16  Venice Principles  Open Government Partnership	Objective 3 – Promote greater understanding of public authorities' obligations and the resources necessary to fulfil them in relation to access to information on the environment
Improve transparency in public life	 ACCC findings  UN Sustainable Development Goal 16  Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act	Objective 4 – Contribute to and promote the development of accessible guidance to the public on access to information on the environment
Develop an agile and responsive staff in line with CSRS 2030	 Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030  CSEES and views of our staff  DPER Policy on Blended Working	Objective 5 – Continuously develop and expand our expertise of the AIE regime nationally and internationally Objective 6 – Provide improved in-house supports and development opportunities to facilitate recruitment and retention of OCEI Staff Objective 7 – Critically review induction and training documentation and requirements using the experience of staff recently appointed to OCEI

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences		OCEI Objectives
ICT Modernisation	  	<p>Open Data Requirements</p> <p>OGCIO Public Service Strategy</p> <p>Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p>	<p>Objective 8 – Provide safe and accessible mechanisms for members of the public to access our services</p> <p>Objective 9 – Provide secure online mechanisms for public bodies to share information</p> <p>Objective 10 – Review and refine CRM to meet evolving business needs and open data requirements</p> <p>Objective 11 – Develop an OCEI Knowledge Management Database</p>



An Coimisiún um Cheapacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí
Commission for Public Service Appointments

Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) key strategic objectives












The CPSA is responsible for regulating recruitment and appointment processes in the public sector. Appointments to professional and senior management positions in local authorities and VECs are also within the remit of the CPSA. The CPSA was established by the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 and ensures that recruitment and selection is carried out by fair, open and merit-based means.

The focus of the secretariat is to support the CPSA in its key responsibilities of:




- Setting standards for recruitment and selection and publishing these standards as Codes of Practice;
- Safeguarding these standards by monitoring and auditing appointment processes;
- Publishing procedures for persons to make a complaint about an appointment process;
- Examining complaints alleging breaches of the Code of Practice;
- Granting licences to public bodies to carry out recruitment;
- Maintaining order in the public service recruitment market



An Coimisiún um Cheapacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí
Commission for Public Service Appointments

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences	CPSA Objectives
<p>Improve transparency in public life</p> <p>Achieve greater openness and inclusivity in access to public services</p>	 UN Sustainable Development Goal 16  Venice Principles  Public Sector Duty	<p>Objective 1 - Expand and further develop CPSA's Regulatory role in each of its statutory functions, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Roll out of new auditing process of licences ■ Roll out of new recruitment licence application process
<p>Innovate, streamline and improve how we handle complaints and all our other customer interactions</p>	 Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030 <p>Views of our stakeholders</p>  CSEES and views of our staff	<p>Objective 2 – Innovate and streamline the process functions of CPSA in order to continue to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of complaint handling and delivery of other services</p>
<p>Develop an agile and responsive staff in line with CSRS 2030</p>	 Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030  CSEES and views of our staff  DPER Policy on Blended Working	<p>Objective 3 – Critically review induction and training documentation and requirements using the experience of staff recently appointed to CPSA.</p> <p>Objective 4 - Provide improved in-house supports and development opportunities to facilitate recruitment and retention of CPSA Staff</p>
<p>Improve public services</p>	 CSEES and views of our staff  Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030  Public Sector Duty	<p>Objective 5 - Expand and enhance Stakeholder engagement to recruiters, candidates, the Public Appointment Service and DPER</p>



Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences		CPSA Objectives
ICT Modernisation	  	<p>Open Data Requirements</p> <p>OGCIO Public Service Strategy</p> <p>Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p>	<p>Objective 6 – Provide safe and accessible mechanisms for members of the public to access our services</p> <p>Objective 7 – Provide secure online mechanisms for public bodies to share information</p> <p>Objective 8 – Review and refine CRM to meet evolving business needs and Open Data requirements</p> <p>Objective 9 - Develop a CPSA Knowledge Management Database</p>



Coimisiún um Chaighdeán in Oifigí Poiblí Standards in Public Office Commission

SIPO key strategic objectives






SIPO has a supervisory role under four pieces of legislation, as follows:









- The Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act 2001 (together known as the Ethics Acts), which set out standards of conduct for public officials, elected and appointed;
- The Electoral Act 1997, which regulates political financing, including political donations and election expenses;
- The Ministerial and Parliamentary Activities Act 1938, which regulates expenditure of public funds to political parties and non-party TDs and Senators; and
- The Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015, which makes lobbying of public officials transparent.

The purpose of the above legislation is to ensure accountability and high standards in Irish public life. The focus of the secretariat is to support SIPO in providing guidance and advice to stakeholders; overseeing compliance and receipt of statutory returns from individuals and organisations; processing complaints and examining possible breaches of the Acts; and undertaking outreach activities to ensure that those with obligations under the above legislation understand and are able to comply with the requirements.






Coimisiún um Chaighdeán in Oifigí Poiblí
Standards in Public Office Commission

<p>Improve public services</p> <p>Improve transparency in public life</p>		<p>Views of our stakeholders</p> <p>UN Sustainable Development Goal 16</p>	<p>Objective 1 - Implement effective outreach programmes to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. persons who have requirements under the relevant legislation are aware of and understand their requirements; and 2. there is an increased awareness of the role of SIPO in promoting transparency and accountability for those involved in public life
<p>Improve transparency in public life</p>	   	<p>Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p> <p>UN Sustainable Development Goal 16</p> <p>The Venice Principles</p> <p>Open Government Partnership</p>	<p>Objective 2 – Engage effectively with Government departments to influence policy and legislation, i.e., reviews of Ethics, Electoral and Regulation of Lobbying legislation</p> <p>Objective 3 – Engage with international organisations and mechanisms such as GRECO, UNCAC, the European Commission, etc.</p> <p>Objective 4 – Contribute, as members of the Advisory Council against Economic Crime and Corruption and related Forum, to a robust whole-of-Government anti-corruption framework</p>

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences	SIPO Objectives
<p>Improve public services</p> <p>Innovate, streamline and improve how we handle all our customer interactions</p>	<p>Views of our stakeholders</p> <p> CSEES and views of our staff</p> <p> Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p> <p> UN Sustainable Development Goal 16</p>	<p>Objective 5 - Develop effective guidelines, advice and FAQs to reflect legislative change and experience/ learning gained in the supervision of the legislation</p>
<p>Improve public services</p> <p>Improve transparency in public life</p> <p>Innovate, streamline and improve how we handle all our customer interactions</p>	<p>Views of our stakeholders</p> <p> UN Sustainable Development Goal 16</p> <p> Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p>	<p>Objective 6 – Implement any changes to the legislation under the supervision of SIPO</p> <p>Objective 7 – Review and streamline current operational processes and procedures particularly with regard to processing election returns with the aim of reducing processing time by 50% (i.e., to nine months)</p> <p>Objective 8 – Overhaul the complaints and investigations process to strengthen procedures and make the process more robust and transparent</p> <p>Objective 9 – Implement the recommendations of a recent Capacity Review</p>
<p>Develop an agile and responsive staff in line with CSRS 2030</p>	<p> Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p> <p> CSEES and views of our staff</p> <p> DPER Policy on Blended Working</p>	<p>Objective 10 – Critically review induction and training documentation and requirements using the experience of staff recently appointed to SIPO</p> <p>Objective 11 - Provide improved in-house supports and development opportunities to facilitate recruitment and retention of SIPO Staff</p>



Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences		SIPO Objectives
ICT Modernisation	  	<p>Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p> <p>Open Data requirements</p> <p>OGCIO Public Service Strategy</p>	<p>Objective 12 - Provide safe and accessible mechanisms for members of the public to access our services</p> <p>Objective 13 - Develop new systems to facilitate online submission of Ethics returns and to facilitate the processing of statutory returns</p> <p>Objective 14 - Introduce an effective and efficient Case Management System to meet evolving business needs and Open Data requirements</p> <p>Objective 15 - Develop a knowledge management Database</p>



Coimisinéir um Nochtadh Cosanta Protected Disclosures Commissioner

Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner (OPDC)

The General Scheme of the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Bill (“the Amendment Bill”) provides for the transposition of the EU Whistleblowing Directive into Irish law. The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 already provides comprehensive legal protections for whistleblowers. The Amendment Bill will give effect to the Directive and will further enhance and strengthen the protections the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 (“the Act”) provides.

Under the Amendment Bill, volunteers, unpaid trainees, board members, shareholders and job applicants will all come within the scope of the Protected Disclosures Act for the first time. Private sector organisations with 50 or more employees will be required to establish formal channels and procedures for their employees to make protected disclosures, just like the public sector.





The Amendment Bill also provides for the establishment of the OPDC to support the operation of the Act. When the Bill is enacted and commenced the Office will be responsible for the setting up of the OPDC




The main functions of the OPDC will be as follows:

- Receive and transmit to an appropriate prescribed person or other suitable person any reports received by the Commissioner under the Act.
- In cases where there is no appropriate prescribed person or other suitable person, follow-up on reports received by the Commissioner under the Act.



Coimisinéir um Nochtadh Cosanta
Protected Disclosures Commissioner

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences	OPDC Objectives
<p>Improve transparency in public life</p>	 UN Sustainable Development Goal 16  Open Government Partnership	<p>Objective 1 - Continue to liaise closely with DPER in relation to enactment of the legislation, establishment, and resourcing of the OPDC</p> <p>Objective 2 - Establish liaison arrangements with all government Departments and prescribed persons</p> <p>Objective 3 - Ensure that the OPDC is in a position to function effectively on establishment, including through the preparation of templates for potential queries and work processes</p>
<p>Improve public services</p> <p>Improve transparency in public life</p>	 UN Sustainable Development Goal 16  The Venice Principles	<p>Objective 4 – Set up the OPDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify and prepare accommodation which is suitable to meet the OPDC confidentiality requirements under the Act ■ Recruit Staff ■ Establish a communications strategy to ensure clarity in relation to the role of the OPDC ■ Develop a website for OPDC ■ Put ICT systems in place for new office

Strategic Themes	Strategic Influences		OPDC Objectives
<p>Develop an agile and responsive staff in line with CSRS 2030</p>		<p>Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030</p>	<p>Objective 5 – Resource the new Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create resilience and flexibility within the wider Office, to ensure that OPDC can be fully resourced for first two years until demand for the service becomes known ■ Create a specialist programme of learning and development for ODPC staff in line with the requirements under the legislation and the Directive
<p>Innovate, streamline and improve how we handle all our customer interactions</p> <p>Develop a long-term, sustainable ICT resourcing model</p>	 	<p>Open Data requirements</p> <p>OGCIO Public Service ICT Strategy</p>	<p>Objective 6 - Create a Case Management System for the OPDC</p>



7. The role of our “Corporate Spine”

There are currently six statutorily independent bodies operating within our office. A seventh statutorily independent body, the ODPC, is expected to be established in 2022 and will operate within our office.

While each of these Offices carries out separate and distinct statutory functions, they share a corporate framework under the rubric of the Office of the Ombudsman. Corporately they function as a single amalgamated agency. The Office is funded on the basis of its direct Exchequer vote, rather than other sources such as grants in aid. The Office is not, therefore, reliant on the Department or a Minister for funding. This is important in terms of not compromising the independence of the individual bodies. The Office has one Accounting Officer who is supported by a Management Advisory Committee which manages the Office, while simultaneously protecting and preserving the statutory independence and functions of each of the constituent parts.

Each statutory Office has its own staff complement and is supported by a strong “corporate spine”. This corporate spine contributes to the substantial independence of the statutory bodies by the provision of its own ICT systems and support, high-standard cyber security protection, human resources, finance, procurement, legal services, communications expertise, and quality assurance. The Office is not, therefore, reliant on the Department or a Minister for these key resources. The Office makes its own decisions and can take an innovative, responsive and flexible response in relation to use of such resources to alleviate any pressure points arising within the individual statutory offices.

By maximising how we share and acquire key services across our Office for administration, corporate & business functions and ICT services, we can deliver efficiency and value to the public while bolstering the independence of the individual offices by allowing them to focus their staff solely on their key objectives.

All the staff of the Office are civil servants of the State, rather than civil servants of a Minister. This enables them to continue to ensure practical and demonstrable independence in the exercise of the statutory functions and in the provision of support to the statutory office holder(s). As Civil Servants of the State our staff adhere to a common Civil Service Governance Code which embraces the culture and values of the Civil Service (Equality, Fairness, Impartiality, Independence, Integrity & Respect). These values together with our own organisational culture and values unifies, supports and empowers our staff to work towards shared goals. The constituent elements of our Corporate Spine are:

Human Resources, Finance, Procurement and Accommodation

In keeping with Strategic Theme 5, key objectives for HR will be to increase usage of OneLearning and guide our transition to a blended working model.

In conjunction with the individual offices HR will ensure that the necessary supports and development opportunities are in place to facilitate recruitment and retention of staff. HR will also critically review induction and training documentation and requirements using the experience of staff recently appointed to those offices to ensure that induction and training is up to date and reflects the work of those offices. HR will also ensure that induction and training reflects developments in Innovation, Human Rights and the Environment.

Finance and Procurement objectives primarily fall under Strategic Theme 4 and key objectives for Finance will be to successfully migrate our accounting and financial reporting systems to a new single Financial Management System which will be controlled centrally by the National Shared Services Office.

Key objectives for Procurement will be to continue to consolidate procurement contracts across the organisation and in particular to work with ICT on a strategic approach to the large procurement contracts coming up over the period to 2025. The procurement and accommodation team are also leading the Green team initiatives throughout the organisation. This will be important in terms of meeting our requirements under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act.

Quality, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications

QSEC provides internal and external communication services for our Office, as well as other communications support services, including design and translation services, to all Offices.

Focussing on our Shared Strategic Themes of 1, 4 and 5 above QSEC will seek to ensure that all sectors of society can easily interact with our Office. This will be achieved by promoting awareness of the Office and its work and by enhancing its reputation as an independent, customer focussed, fair and influential organisation and by helping to ensure high-quality and customer-focussed casework. QSEC will actively promote awareness of Office websites and the website complaint portal (see Key ICT Projects below) and will seek to ensure that the portal is the main channel for receipt of complaints to the Ombudsman Office. In conjunction with our PSD Committee QSEC will seek to improve the accessibility of our websites and identify where we can improve outreach to and awareness among minority and specific interest groups.

Having regard to our Shared Strategic Theme no 1 QSEC will seek to facilitate an improvement in the quality of public services by sharing learning with, and providing guidance to, bodies under jurisdiction through Casebooks, Webinars, Information sessions and other guidance material.



QSEC will seek to develop a blended approach to facilitate Ombudsman interaction with Heads of Public Bodies and minority and specific interest groups.

QSEC will also contribute to Shared Strategic Theme no 1 by encouraging staff engagement and promoting good information flow throughout the organisation and will create awareness among all staff of the organisation's goals and relevant developments by incorporating them into all relevant internal communications.

Legal Services

The Legal Services Unit (LSU) are the principal legal advisers to each of the statutory offices. The LSU's purpose is to support the statutory office-holders and their staff to exercise their functions well, within the rule of law. They do this by providing legal advice on the exercise of statutory functions; monitoring and advising on relevant reforms to the law; supporting good corporate governance, in accordance with the law; and representing each office in litigation.

The LSU will advise each statutory office on specific issues relevant to each office's remit, as well as advising the Office as a whole on how to mitigate cross-cutting legal risks. To achieve this, the LSU will adopt a consistent approach to giving legal advice that it is comprehensible and comparable, will empower staff in each office to work effectively within their legal framework and will empower teams to simplify complex duties to make them comprehensible for our customers so that they can engage effectively with the organisation. The LSU will effectively manage litigation taken by and against each office and will promote value for money in the use of legal services by each office. The LSU will support each office in reviewing and making any recommendations for reform of its governing legislation. The LSU will support ICT modernisation consistent with legal requirements, including data protection and confidentiality.

Information & Communications Technology Unit

Our 2025 ICT strategy is critical to the work of the entire Office. Our ICT Unit is responsible for developing, delivering and maintaining an efficient, innovative and diverse range of secure responsive modern ICT solutions, policies and services that support the various functions of the Office. Within the broader context of national e-Government and ICT policies, the ICT Unit supports the objectives of the Office as a whole and the objectives of individual offices. It also facilitates the work of our staff and helps to improve the quality of services that we provide to our stakeholders.

ICT's overall aim is captured by Strategic Theme 6 and it is to drive ICT as key enabler to delivering improved Office and public services; to position ICT as business enabler to remove and reduce administrative burdens; and to align ICT projects and business priorities equally. While serving a number of independent offices who each carry out diverse functions it is important to recognise that our ICT resources are not unlimited. Given our limited resources we consider it important that our ICT structures provide for a secure, robust and sustainable model.

In that regard we have identified that our ICT Strategy is best served by aligning (insofar as is possible) with the OGCIO Public Service ICT Strategy (which we have included as a Key Strategic Influence 9 above).

Our ICT strategy will drive a cloud-first systems approach and will look to harness new technologies to open up additional communication opportunities and extend engagement with all our external stakeholders, customers and public bodies alike. The strategy will strengthen and adhere to the principles for the management, security and governance of the Office's Information, Applications and Infrastructure. The strategy will be informed by key principles relating to ICT Project Management; Effective ICT Change Management; a new ICT Training strategy; and ICT standardisation where possible.

While individual office / business unit needs inform part of the overall ICT Strategy the direction signalled above will in turn inform the offices / business units own strategies as it will require a standardised approach from the offices / units in terms of how they approach ICT projects. It will also require a commitment of resources in terms of project board/team participation and ICT training.

As noted earlier, our Office is influenced by the Civil Service Renewal Strategy 2030 which includes harnessing digital technology and innovation as a core pillar. We also noted earlier how the Open Data Strategy will influence how we collect, store and publish our data. Both of these strategies will inform our ICT for 2022 and beyond as reflected in the key ICT projects for the 2025 Strategy cycle below.



Key ICT projects for the 2025 Strategy cycle

Strategic ICT and Business-side projects over the previous strategy cycle have replaced legacy infrastructure, migrated and enhanced outdated systems and drove a digital first, paper-light approach. Our ICT Strategy for 2022 and beyond will outline a work programme for all major ICT medium to long-term Business projects over the next strategy cycle. This work programme will further evolve the Office's system capabilities and tools to best deliver all services provided by the Office; to improve upon previous Office systems enhancements; and to introduce new services and customer engagement opportunities into the suite of Office's systems. Key projects will include:

- An enhanced Workforce Mobility solution to support Working from Home and Teleworking programs / initiatives.
- A new Cyber Security Strategy to strengthen security, introduce multi-factor authentication and audited appropriate access to all Office systems.
- A Critical Review of Office Case and Document Management Systems direction to inform enhancement and improvement of existing services and to provide for external connection points to best receive from and provide information to all external stakeholders.
- A new, secure Customer Relationship Management system, baselined against re-usable elements of existing Case Management solutions in Ombudsman and Information Commissioners Offices will be put in place for SIPO Systems.
- Re-visit the design of each of the office websites to provide a more user friendly and customer-centric experience for users and to provide a customer-oriented portal and signposting experience with online submission(s) tracking and services engagement to improve user engagement with this Office.
- ICT will commence its plans to move to a cloud first based model. We will review all systems and where appropriate migrate them to the cloud.

8. Our Commitments

We will take an Innovative Approach

We will apply an innovative approach to improving the work that we do across the Office. Our Office Innovation team was formed in early 2020 in response to the Public Service Innovation Strategy – 'Making Innovation Real'. Taking into consideration scale, resources, transferability and potential benefits for the Office our Innovation Team has developed a programme of possible innovation projects for 2022 onwards. The programme focuses on the areas where we can derive the maximum benefit for the Office. Using supports and resources developed by the DPER to support organisations in driving a culture of innovation we will ensure that we are effectively managing each project. Based on measured outcomes the Office can then make an informed decision to scale up across the Office.

We will show Leadership in Human Rights

Our Office is committed to providing a service to all clients that respects human rights and their right to equal treatment and we have adopted a proactive approach to implementing this duty. In 2018 we established a Public Sector Duty Working Group to assess the human rights and equality issues which arise in relation to our functions, and to produce and implement an action plan. During 2018-2020, most of the phase 1 actions were completed. We have progressed our Public Service Duty and have produced an Action Plan for 2022 - 2025. Our key action for 2022 - 2025 will be the development of a human rights based model to use in the Ombudsman's complaints handling work. Our re-assessment of our Public Service Duty and our action plan are available on the Office websites. As required under the Act we will report on developments and achievements in relation to our Public Sector Duty in our annual report.

We will consider the Environment

The National Climate Action Plan 2021 sets out a number of requirements for our Office. Our Green Team has created a strategy to identify the policies, plans and actions needed over the course of this Statement of Strategy to meet our requirements under the Climate Action Plan. In addition to meeting these requirements our Green Team will seek to create a culture of green and sustainable behaviour that is action-oriented in order to achieve our targets. We will seek to increase our staff's awareness of our green obligations and energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets and include, support and empower staff in understanding these issues and undertaking positive steps to reduce their environmental impact and enable change.



