

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE DEFENCE FORCES



Coimisiún um Óglaigh na hÉireann
Commission on the Defence Forces

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FOREWORD

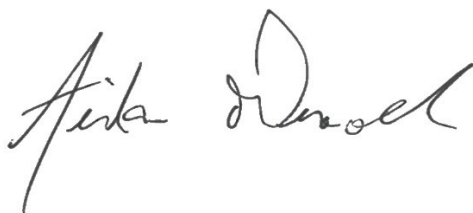
Recent events have focused unaccustomed attention on our national defence policy and Defence Forces. While the international circumstances that give rise to this are deeply worrying, the growing recognition of the importance of defence and security matters is both new and welcome.

It is hoped that this report will now provide a platform for an extensive and well-grounded debate leading to clear political decisions on the future of the Defence Forces. In this report, the Commission repeatedly draws attention to the need for these decisions to ensure clarity and consistency between stated policy, level of ambition, capability and funding, and this is strongly linked to proposals for transformative change in Defence Force structures, culture and people management.

The members of the Commission on the Defence Forces have worked collegially for just over 13 months to deliver this report. I wish to record my deep personal gratitude to all 16 members who served on the Commission in that period for their unstinting efforts throughout, despite the challenges of Covid and the breadth of our work programme. Throughout this time Commission members retained both a strong focus on the importance of our task, and an independence of mind that has shaped this report.

I am very grateful to Minister Simon Coveney TD and Minister of State Jack Chambers TD for their firm support and clear guidance, and to the members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, and Chair Charles Flanagan TD, for their very positive engagement with the Commission.

The Commission was supported in its work by a dedicated and very capable Secretariat led by Cathal Duffy (Head of Secretariat) and comprising Gráinne Guinan, Lieutenant Commander Paul Hegarty, Jerry Higgins, Fiona Allen, Squadron Quartermaster Sergeant Kern O'Neill, David Cullinane, Clodagh Callanan and Teresa Hynes. Liaison with the Defence Forces was facilitated by Colonel Colm O'Luasa, and with the Department of Defence by Killian Magee. On behalf of the Commission, I wish to thank them all for going the extra mile so often throughout our work.



Aidan O'Driscoll, Chair
Commission on the Defence Forces

February 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

The Government appointed the Commission on the Defence Forces on 15 December 2020 with the Terms of Reference and membership as set out in Appendix 1. The Commission has focussed its work throughout the past 13 months on considering the appropriate capabilities, structures and staffing of both the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) and Reserve Defence Force (RDF) with a view to the immediate future, and the uncertain period beyond 2030.

From the outset of its work, the Commission sought input from interested and informed organisations and individuals, as well as from the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence. In response to a public consultation exercise, the Commission received some 480 submissions, while it also met directly with over 1,000 Defence Forces' personnel of all ranks, including civilian employees, in their barracks and bases throughout the country. This engagement was open, honest and very informative, with many reporting a strong sense of crisis in the Defence Forces, which is also reflected in some public commentary. One immediate cause is the current understaffing in all three services, but it is clear that there are also deeper factors involved. While there is a recognition amongst Defence Forces' personnel that the organisation faces issues and challenges, it is clear that there is also a serious desire for change at all levels. This underlines the need for clear decisions and urgent action, and the Commission believes that this report provides a basis for both, and, it is hoped, will fuel a much needed debate on defence and security matters in this country.

Vision/Transformation/Culture

The scale of overall change recommended in this report is challenging and far-reaching. The recommendations are designed to deliver on the Commission's vision for the Defence Forces of 2030 and beyond:

The Defence Forces will be a joint military force capable of providing the people of Ireland with a safe and secure environment, and enforcing and protecting Ireland's sovereignty. It will uphold national values, reflect the diverse society that it serves, and remain poised to meet the challenges of an evolving and complex world.

The transformational change required to deliver on this vision will require the Defence Forces to put its people at the centre of the organisation, and will involve reshaping its structures and capabilities, underpinned by cultural change and investment. The Defence Forces will need time and space to transform and modernise, but change is essential and implementation cannot be long-fingered. This vision, coupled with the ambition for transformation, will need to be pursued relentlessly, with strong external and parliamentary oversight, and will require the engagement of external expertise to help drive and support the necessary transformation process.

Security Context and Defence Policy

The Threat and Risk Environment looking out to 2030 (and beyond) remains complex and unpredictable. The Commission identified interrelated trends that are of particular importance in shaping the future security environment in which the Defence Forces must navigate. The Commission notes that societal and organisational resilience is a critical asset and, as such, in areas where redundancy is unaffordable, credible plans to surge capacity must be in place. The Commission considers that the RDF will be a critical asset in this regard.

The Terms of Reference state that the Commission should be guided and informed in its work by current defence policy, which is set out in the White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019. This policy framework has provided an essential backdrop for guiding and informing the Commission's work. Within the EU context, a discussion on the strategic direction of the Common Security and Defence Policy is currently taking place. Referred to as the 'Strategic Compass', this is intended to provide clarity about the EU's policy orientations and specific goals in the areas of crisis management, resilience, capability development and working with partners.

Overview of Roles & Level of Ambition

The Commission has noted that the relatively high levels of ambition for Ireland's military capabilities, as set out in the White Paper, are not supported by the resources provided for the Defence Forces. This has led the Commission to conclude that there is a disconnect between stated policy, resources and capabilities. There is an urgent need for clarification of the level of ambition for the roles of the Defence Forces. In the absence of such clarity, the Commission has created a framework focused around three tiers of level of ambition (LOA). These three tiers, which the Commission has used to frame the capability requirements for a 21st century Defence Forces, are not exhaustive but have proven useful to guide the Commission's own deliberations. The three tiers of LOA are:

LOA 1 current capability: *Aiming to uphold sovereign rights and serving on peace support operations to the same extent as at present.*

LOA 1 involves striving to maintain current capabilities of the Defence Forces with appropriate replacement and routine modernisation of equipment and infrastructure. It involves continuing the commitment to a Defence Forces' establishment of at least 13,569¹. Some reforms and restructuring of the Defence Forces could be implemented within the resource limitations but the core capabilities will not keep pace with the increasingly challenging security environment, the diversification and broadening of threats and the growing complexity of the modern operating environment. In the Commission's view, this LOA would:

¹ The establishment for the Defence Forces is 13,569 made up of 9,500 PDF and 4,069 RDF.

- Not be consistent with the more ambitious statements of defence policy contained in the White Paper 2015;
- Leave the Defence Forces unable to conduct a meaningful defence of the State against a sustained act of aggression from a conventional military force; and
- Be likely to require a reduced commitment to international peace support, crisis management and humanitarian operations due to capacity constraints.

LOA 2 enhanced capability: *Building on current capability to address specific priority gaps in our ability to deal with an assault on Irish sovereignty and to serve in higher intensity Peace Support Operations.*

LOA 2 involves identifying specific additional capabilities needed to address key deficiencies in capacity to undertake current and foreseeable new tasks, within the broad terms of current national defence policy. Within the context of a decision being taken by Government to step up from LOA 1 to LOA 2, whether as a discrete step or as an interim position en route to LOA 3, the Commission has identified a range of key capability priorities in the land, air and maritime domains that would need to be prioritised for LOA 2 to be met. These include:

- Providing improved troop protection, fire power and air and coastal defence for land forces, particularly in the light of more demanding roles overseas;
- Enhanced situational awareness with recognised maritime and air pictures through the acquisition and development of primary radar, coastal radar and associated systems' to allow the development of a Recognised Air Picture to support national security;
- Significantly strengthening the military intelligence and cyber defence capabilities of the Defence Forces, including through the creation of a Joint Cyber Defence Command;
- Accelerating the upgrade of the naval fleet and operating it to an optimum level through double crewing and greater use of technology;
- Enhanced mobility and lift through an increased and enlarged fleet of fixed and rotary aircraft and access to appropriate multinational arrangements to enhance its troop transport, cargo and ATCA capabilities; and
- Enhanced contingent capability through the revitalisation of the Reserve Defence Force as part of a genuine single Defence Force across the domains of land, air and sea, and in the newer domains of cyber and space.

LOA 3 conventional capability: *Developing full spectrum defence capabilities to protect Ireland and its people to an extent comparable to similar sized countries in Europe.*

LOA 3 would require Ireland to develop significantly strengthened capabilities in all domains, with commensurately higher levels of defence spending – of the order of two and a half to three times overall defence spending in recent years. These significantly stronger capabilities would also allow for a deeper engagement in international peace and humanitarian missions and would deliver benefits in terms of aid to the civil power (ATCP) and aid to the civil authority (ATCA) capacity. The capabilities for LOA 3 could involve, *inter alia*:

- Developing a substantial mechanised component of the Army offering state of the art force protection, communications, ISTAR² and firepower;
- A balanced fleet of at least 12 naval ships, supported by appropriate technology;
- Air combat and intercept capability through the acquisition of a squadron of combat aircraft;
- Combat aircraft, pilots and support personnel to provide organic intra-theatre mobility based on tactical transport helicopters to support overseas deployment of air assets;
- Maturing a Joint Cyber Defence Command; and
- The Army Ranger Wing (ARW) having an organic self-sustainment capability which would include dedicated combat helicopter assets.

There is no implication that the Commission finds all three LOAs to be equally credible. In particular, the Commission is clear that LOA 1 – essentially the continuation of “business as usual” – will leave this country unable to meet its desired level of military deployment overseas, weak on ATCP and ATCA capabilities and, most importantly, without a credible military capability to protect Ireland, its people and its resources for any sustained period.

The Commission underlines the importance of clearly stated levels of ambition for all roles assigned to the Defence Forces and recommends that in order to ensure consistency between policy, levels of ambition and the defence budget, any such future decisions on defence should reflect the resourcing, scale and capability of the Defence Forces.

Capabilities

Building the right capabilities is a prerequisite to achieving the vision for the Defence Forces. The Commission has set out capability requirements for each level of ambition in respect of equipment and, in the case of cyber in particular, in terms of personnel, and has also addressed ‘green defence’, the countering of hybrid aggression and emerging technologies. The Commission recognises that any final decisions on the specific capabilities recommended will require appropriate examination by defence planners to develop detailed specifications, assess value for money and consider whether the same effect can be more effectively delivered by different means. The decision making process on such capabilities has to align with the unbreakable link between Government decisions on defence policy, level of ambition, capability and approved budget lines.

Of crucial importance in this area, the Commission considers that there is an urgent requirement to put in place a codified top-down Capability Development Planning process, potentially building on the processes already in place, which both meets national and international requirements, and which serves to support proper engagement with capability development processes at EU and NATO Partnership for Peace level. The need for clearly

² Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance.

stated levels of ambition will support the pursuit of capability development over the long-term and will allow adequate time for careful consideration of the development and sustainment of high-value investments for large-scale capital projects. Where possible, future capabilities should be dual-use, therefore allowing them to be used in delivering ATCP and ATCA operations in addition to core military functions.

The Commission believes that cyberspace is a dynamic and rapidly evolving area and will be a key military domain in the period to 2030 and beyond. The Commission has noted the policy commitment made in the White Paper that it is necessary for the Defence Forces to be trained and equipped to NATO standards and, as such, the Commission believes that this should now act as the benchmark for cyber capability development within the Defence Forces. Given the strong interdependences and overlapping nature of some taskings and challenges in this domain, any enhanced capabilities in the cyber domain should be developed within the framework of national security policy, the National Cyber Security Strategy and in extremely close co-ordination with the National Cyber Security Centre, An Garda Síochána and other relevant agencies, including the National Security Analysis Centre.

In outlining the capabilities required for the cyber domain, the Commission believes that the Defence Forces will be required to retain certain key capabilities across all three levels of ambition, with each defining the scale of the requirement in terms of personnel and infrastructure. As such, the key driver of the scale of capability to be delivered will be the numbers and competences of dedicated and trained specialist personnel.

Structures

The Commission's Terms of Reference stipulate that consideration be given to the most appropriate governance and high-level Command and Control structures in the Defence Forces, as well as appropriate structures for the Army and its brigade structure, the Air Corps, the Naval Service and the RDF. The Commission makes a series of recommendations aimed at reforming high-level Command and Control³ and addressing current deficiencies with respect to jointness which is not practiced or inculcated within the organisational culture of the Defence Forces, or in preparation for operational taskings. The key recommendations involve the creation of a Chief of Defence (CHOD) with the appropriate military Command and Control authority of the Defence Forces at the strategic level. The CHOD would be supported by a newly created Defence Forces' Headquarters, as well as by three Service Chiefs of equal rank (covering the land, air and maritime domains), a new Vice CHOD / Joint Force Commander, and an externally recruited Head of Transformation.

³ The Commission understands that its proposals, and in particular the creation of a CHOD, will impact significantly on current governance structures, and recognises therefore, that the future governance and oversight framework of the Minister and the Department of Defence will need to be redesigned to provide effective assurance and accountability. This area is beyond the Terms of Reference of the Commission and is not therefore further developed in this report.

In relation to unity of command, the Commission concludes that a Chief of Army is necessary to act as the professional head of the Army and to bring the Army under one Commander, a significant failing of the current system. The Air Corps and Naval Service should become services, on a par with the Army, contributing to a joint strategic command at Defence Forces Headquarters and Joint Force Command. Given the importance of service parity, the names of both should change to the Air Force and the Navy respectively.

In respect of the Army, the Commission has identified a range of issues with the current Army structure including that the current brigade system primarily comprises two regional administrative structures that are not deployable and do not align to international standards in terms of their strength or capabilities. Furthermore, among other issues, the current battalions do not align to NATO standards, are under-staffed and under-resourced. In these circumstances, the Commission believes that there is an urgent need to restructure the Army into a more agile and flexible force structure that can meet current and future operational taskings. The Commission recommends that the future disposition and structures of the Army be regionally balanced to ensure a critical mass of permanent and reserve forces in each region to allow for adequate recruitment, retention and career progression. To achieve this, the Commission recommends that the CHOD initiate an immediate force design process, assisted by external experts with access to international military expertise, which should comply with a range of principles and parameters that the Commission has outlined, and be consistent with this report's recommended implementation architecture.

The Air Force should comprise of a structure that can manage, maintain and administer a modern and balanced fleet of aircraft and, in the event that a primary air radar capability is introduced, as recommended, the Chief of the Air Force should be responsible for maintaining a Recognised Air Picture to ensure that Irish territorial airspace and Irish controlled airspace are fully monitored and that any infringements on Irish sovereignty are detected and responded to.

The Navy should comprise of a structure that can manage, maintain and administer a modern and balanced fleet. The Chief of the Navy should be responsible for maintaining an enhanced national Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP) that will monitor Irish territorial waters and Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone, and any infringements on Irish sovereignty would be detected and responded to. In developing a national RMP, the Navy should operate jointly with the Air Force and utilise maritime patrol aircraft and surface patrols to conduct surveillance, as well as utilising maritime UAVs, satellite technology and coastal radar.

The Commission notes that the current Command and Control relationship for the ARW is complex and opaque, and recommends that under the proposed new structures the unit should report to the Joint Force Commander. Furthermore, to align to international norms, it should be renamed as Ireland's Special Operations Force (IRL SOF) and should co-locate

permanent Air and Maritime Task Groups in Casement Aerodrome and Haulbowline Naval base.

The Commission expects that the role of intelligence in underpinning the security of the State will grow in the near term. The Commission is clear that Military Intelligence has an important role in monitoring security threats to the State. It plays a unique role in leveraging military intelligence internationally with regard to threats to the State, in assessing threat levels to overseas missions and potential overseas missions, and in relation to the internal security of the Defence Forces. However, unlike many comparator countries where the military have clearly defined roles in relation to intelligence, the roles and responsibilities of Military Intelligence here are less well defined in law and the Commission recommends that this be urgently clarified, and underpinned by appropriate legislation, within the context of a coherent national intelligence architecture.

People

During the course of its work, the Commission visited 13 military installations and one naval vessel which provided an invaluable opportunity to meet with large numbers of Defence Forces' personnel. Such was the volume and range of issues raised that it would be impossible for the Commission to consider them all. Nevertheless, the Commission has set out a broad range of recommendations designed to address many of the issues raised that came to the fore arising from an absence of a strategic approach to HR management. Implementation of a comprehensive approach to Strategic HR within the Defence Forces with, in particular, the establishment of a Strategic HR Change Leadership Team, to be led by an externally recruited Head of Transformation, who would support the CHOD directly with the transformation of the Defence Forces, has been identified as both urgent and critical.

From early on this process, it became clear that there were recurring themes and specific HR related issues that are a source of considerable frustration and, in some cases, exasperation. Amongst the issues raised were those concerning aspects of career progression, career planning, the lack of a modern organisational perspective on work-life balance, the criteria surrounding pensions and extensions of contractual service, and the lack of flexibility within the current establishment. It is clear to the Commission that many such issues are internal management matters that should be resolved by the Defence Forces. This points towards a sentiment observed by the Commission, at all levels of the organisation, of disempowerment and a lack of agency which manifests as an expectation that others are to sort out the issues, allowing the Defence Forces to get on with military operations. This culture can express itself as a strong sense on the part of members of not being appreciated or understood. This is just one aspect of the organisation's culture that needs to change, but there are other far more challenging cultural traits that will continue to impede the Defence Forces unless there is a radical cultural shift at all levels.

The Commission is particularly concerned by the evident culture across the Defence Forces which is masculine and has a limited appreciation of diversity of all kinds. This culture is compounded by the inadequacy of existing grievance processes, where there is a reluctance to engage due in many cases to fear of reprisal if complaints are aired, and particularly so if the complainant is part of a minority, particularly women in a male dominated environment. To effect real and lasting cultural change in this regard will require significant attitude and behavioural shifts by current staff, together with the generation of a critical mass of female participation across the organisation at all levels. Clearly this will take time to achieve, but this element of the culture change process can be accelerated by setting short term targets for female recruitment and participation on career courses, and the creation of a mechanism to ensure there is female participation and input at all decision making levels of the organisation.

In relation to diversity more generally, the Commission received welcome and positive feedback from the Defence Forces' LGBT Network of the experience of its members with evident strong support from senior leadership. However, it is also evident that more needs to be done to consult with the communities of under-represented groups to discover the barriers to attracting greater numbers of recruits to both the PDF and the RDF, with supports put in place to enable the organisation to become a more welcoming place for recruits from more diverse backgrounds.

Overall, the Commission has identified a need for a fundamental cultural change process to build a much more modern, open Defence Forces that responds to change quickly and better reflects Irish society today in its culture, values and symbols. To provide momentum and credibility to the cultural change process, the Commission recommends early implementation of a number of high profile immediate impact changes, including the introduction of gender, diversity and unconscious bias training for personnel at all ranks of the Defence Forces.

In terms of recruitment, the Defence Forces recruit the vast majority of its members at entry-level ranks which differs from many public and private sector organisations where vacancies at all levels can and are routinely filled from open market recruitment. The Commission recommends increased use of direct entry recruitment to fill specialist posts with appropriately adjusted training and physical fitness requirements, and urgent reform of working arrangements to allow for flexible service and more family friendly work practices.

Regarding turnover and retention, there is evidence that gaps in specialist areas can have a disproportionate impact on operations. This is particularly the case in the air and maritime domains where deployability of aircraft and ships have been curtailed arising from critical shortfalls of personnel from specialist units, especially units that are smaller in nature and, as such, where there is less redundancy. These issues are also to be found in certain specialist areas of the Army where, likewise, specialist units can be vulnerable to gaps in strength

and/or experience as, due to the skills required, vacancies cannot readily be filled by moving untrained personnel from other areas. As such, these personnel shortfalls result in greater pressure being placed on individual members and units, and this can also act as a push factor in terms of retention of specialist personnel. Within public pay policy parameters, the Commission recommends the introduction of a mechanism to provide for ongoing review of the application of existing specialist pay rates and allowances, and to make recommendations, where adjustments are required.

While the Commission has no remit to look at rates of pay or allowances, it has observed that much of the commentary surrounding issues of pay in the Defence Forces does not seem to fully reflect the totality of the remuneration package, particularly so in the context of various allowances that are payable. The Commission believes that a more complete portrayal of the total package of attractive benefits to joining the Defence Forces needs to be better communicated as there has been a somewhat disproportionate emphasis on basic pay rates. The Commission recommends that the wider benefits of joining the Defence Forces should become a central feature of future recruitment campaigns.

From its review of the evolution of remuneration systems and engagement with personnel of all ranks, a number of issues regarding current pay and allowance structures were identified by the Commission. In making its recommendations in this regard, a key focus has been on enhancing the equity of existing structures, and chief among these are a number of anomalies in relation to the remuneration of personnel in their first three years of service, which is seen as particularly important as higher rates of attrition are occurring during the early years of service.

On the issue of pay bargaining, the Commission believes that the Defence Forces' representative bodies should be active participants in future public service pay bargaining processes, and recommends that they should be facilitated if they wish to pursue associate membership of ICTU.

Reserve Defence Force (RDF)

The Commission has considered the appropriate structure and size of the RDF as part of a joint force approach across the various domains. It is apparent that the RDF is in an extremely weakened state, with many dedicated members of the view that it is being allowed to "die on its feet". The Commission believes that this is quite unacceptable and is concerned about the extent of genuine commitment to supporting and developing the RDF. A series of recommendations are made that are designed to create a reserve force that can seamlessly train, operate and deploy with the PDF, nationally and internationally. This should genuinely operationalise the Single Force Concept. To instigate the necessary organisational culture will require a significant change in mind-set in the Defence Forces at all levels of leadership. The role of the CHOD, and in particular the proposed new Service Chiefs, will be pivotal in

demonstrating the PDF's commitment to regenerating the RDF. Operationalising an enhanced role for the RDF will require detailed planning to be set out in a regeneration plan underpinned by a new high level vision for the RDF. This will also require a clear Government commitment to appropriate funding to support the regeneration, and the necessary measures should be put in place by 2023.

The Defence Forces need to develop a clear and focused recruitment plan for the RDF, with clearly identified milestones and annual reviews, targeted at meeting the full establishment of the RDF within eight years to include the recruitment of specialists, combat support and combat service support personnel. The Defence Forces should also ensure that the RDF fully reflects the diversity of contemporary Irish society with lateral entry mechanisms created for those with prior foreign military experience who wish to join the RDF. The Commission also recommends re-establishment of the Air Corps Reserve as a matter of urgency with a particular focus on recruiting trained pilots, technicians and air traffic controllers.

A more complex issue arises in relation to addressing civilian employment issues for reservists. Many employers are enthusiastic about the involvement of their staff in the RDF and the Commission recommends that employment protection legislation should be considered and discussed with employer representative bodies and Trade Unions to protect reservists and ensure their availability when needed.

Defence Funding

Compared to our peers in western and northern Europe, it is very clear that Ireland is an outlier in relation to defence funding. The scale of additional funding that is required for each level of ambition has been illustrated on a single year basis by comparing the 2020 gross outturn (representing LOA 1) against an approximation for LOA 2 and LOA 3. Based on the Commission's own estimate of the cost of a step up to LOA 2, an annual increase of some 50%, bringing the funding up to approximately €1,500m⁴ per year, would be required. For a further step up to LOA 3, which is based on the 2020 average GDP % of comparator countries applied to Ireland's estimated 2020 GNI*, the Commission estimates that an annual budget of almost €3,000m would be required.

The Commission acknowledges the great challenge faced in managing the public finances in the wake of the financial crash and more recently the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It recognises that budgetary policy must be framed within a prudent macro-economic framework and in the light of many competing demands.

As has previously been acknowledged by Government in its White Paper and White Paper Update, demands on defence capability are becoming more sophisticated and dynamic while

⁴ This is an estimation based on indicative figures provided by the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces for the purposes of calculating the approximate cost of a step up to LOA 2.

present funding levels only allow for major equipment platforms and infrastructure to be upgraded very sequentially, or over extended periods of acquisition. This implies a very low level of ambition and the scale of the gap is clearly illustrated by the financial data in this report. It is clear to the Commission that the current level of financial commitment (LOA 1) delivers military capabilities which are inadequate for the Defence of Ireland and its people from the threats identified in this report and staying at this level will also severely constrain the capacity of the Defence Forces to maintain its overseas commitments and deliver required levels of ATCP and ATCA supports. Providing a credible defence, on a par with comparator countries, would require a Government policy decision to move to LOA 3 with the appropriate budget. A Government decision to move to LOA 2 would address priority gaps in our current capabilities to defend Ireland's sovereign interests, serve on high intensity missions abroad and contribute to national resilience and security. However, it would not deliver the capability required to develop full spectrum defence capabilities on a par with other sovereign European countries. The Commission recommends that consideration be given to a step up to LOA 2, as described in this report, in the short term pending the more detailed policy debate and decision required for higher levels of ambition.

Implementation

In order to achieve the necessary scale of change, the Commission has highlighted five core areas that must be addressed in a detailed implementation plan on foot of policy decisions in relation to level of ambition and budget:

- **Transformational change to modernise the Organisational Culture, its Human Resources Strategy** and practices, putting human resources – the Defence Forces' people – at the centre of the organisation, through re-engaging in a different way with its core values, renewing its 'contract' with its people with modern work practices, career management systems and transparent promotion systems based on merit.
- **Reform High-level Command and Control and creation of a Joint Strategic Headquarters** – requires the appointment of a Chief of Defence (CHOD), with full command and control of the Defence Forces, and commensurate accountability, supported by three Service Chiefs. Create a Joint Strategic Headquarters staffed by all services, including civilian experts, to support the Chief of Defence in delivering Defence Forces 2030+.
- **Revitalise the Reserve Defence Force** – to create a reserve force that can seamlessly train, operate and deploy with the Permanent Defence Force, nationally and internationally.
- **Reform and Restructure the Services** – to provide a modern Army, Navy and Air Force designed and structured to provide the future integrated force for national defence, overseas missions and ATCP/ATCA.
- **Joint Capability Development** – to support all Services in developing the joint future force, thereby providing Government with military force options at readiness for national and international operations.

The Commission believes that, at an early stage, following a Government decision on this report, an implementation oversight group, with an independent Chair, should be appointed together with an Implementation Management Office supported by external change management experts.

Strategic communications will transcend the change and reform agenda, requiring the CHOD and key strategic leaders to communicate internally and externally, providing a catalyst for encouraging policy debate around issues pertaining to national defence and security.

Recommendations

The following table lists all of the recommendations made in this report. For clarity, it is important that recommendations are not read in isolation and each should be read in conjunction with the content of the relevant chapter.

[* A number of recommendations below are asterisked to indicate that, in the Commission’s assessment, these are likely to either require new, or the amendment of, primary legislation. This indicative assessment is subject to legal advice.]

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
Chapter 4 – Key Roles of the Defence Forces				
1	4.3	Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP)	Specific taskings of the Defence Forces, including those arising from ATCP and ATCA, should be subject to regular review for continued relevance and priority, with appropriately defined levels of ambition.	23
2	4.3	Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP)	That an immediate focus be given to standing down a number of current Defence Forces’ ATCP taskings which no longer seem justified in the current security situation.	23
3	4.3	Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP)	The reassessment of priorities, structures and the distribution of resources across the full spectrum of ATCP activities and, in particular, in areas such as Chemical Biological Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN) response, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), and provision of Engineer Specialist Search Teams (ESST).	23
4	4.3	Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP)	The respective roles of the Garda Emergency Response Unit (ERU) and the Defence Forces’ ARW should be clarified to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how they would interact in an operational situation and common procedures and operational guidelines should be developed.	23
5	4.3	Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP)	Clear inter-agency policies and planning for the deployment of the Defence Forces to support routine armed policing duties in times of emergency should be developed and that the necessary contingency	23

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
			planning and training for such deployments should be undertaken.	
6	4.4	Maritime and Air Security	Ireland should deepen its engagement with the implementation of the EU's Maritime Security Strategy.	23
7	4.4	Maritime and Air Security *	A whole-of-government National Maritime Security Strategy and a National Aviation Security Strategy should be developed. As part of this, or in advance, the powers required by the Naval Service for effective enforcement, in support of national security, in the maritime domain should be addressed.	23
8	4.4	Maritime and Air Security	The future Naval legal branch should include additional legal officers with appropriate maritime law and fisheries law specialisations.	23
9	4.5	International Peace and Security	Opportunities offered by the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation to develop Ireland's defence capabilities should be more fully explored and exploited than at present.	23
10	4.5	International Peace and Security	Future Government decisions on Ireland's capacity and appetite to take on higher intensity peace support operations must be coherent with the resourcing and scale of the Defence Forces and ensure consistency between international security and defence policy objectives, level of ambition and defence budget.	23
11	4.6	Aid to the Civil Authorities (ATCA)	A whole of government air and maritime services 'needs analyses' should be undertaken in the short term in an attempt to highlight trends and predict needs into the future over a 10-20 year period.	23 - 24
Chapter 6 – Capability Requirements for a 21st Century Defence Forces⁵				
12	6.2	Capability Development Planning	The immediate establishment of a codified top-down Capability Development Planning process through the creation of a permanent civil-military structure in order to embed capability development within the Department and the Defence Forces.	53
13	6.12	Green Defence	That analysis of green defence solutions and horizon scanning to identify emerging technologies, is embedded in the capability development planning process.	53
14	6.4	Capabilities *	Within the context of a decision being taken by Government that the capability requirements of the Defence Forces need to step up from LOA 1 to LOA 2, whether as a discrete step or as an interim position en route to LOA 3, the following is recommended:	54

⁵ It must be noted that in making these recommendations the Commission acknowledges that future defence planners may, in their detailed analysis, assess that the same effect can be delivered by different methods and as such the specific equipment recommendations outlined are intended to be indicative rather than prescriptive once the recommended capability requirement is met.

No.	Section and Heading	Recommendation	Page No.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Replacement of the existing APCs with a larger and enhanced fleet equipped with sufficient firepower for future overseas missions, and with 'level 4' armour across armour platforms where required; 	
6.5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An accelerated programme of Naval vessel replacement to ensure a balanced fleet of nine modern ships by early in the next decade; 	
6.6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That all modern vessels be double crewed to ensure each vessel spends an absolute minimum of 220 days at sea per year, with this being phased in over the course of the vessel replacement programme; 	
6.7	Capabilities (cont.)*		
6.9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That smart metrics for patrol days should be developed and agreed between the Naval Service and the SFPA focused on quality and effectiveness of enforcement activities rather than quantity; 	
6.10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of a primary radar capability to ensure a complete Recognised Air Picture can be maintained; 	
6.11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of anti-drone or counter UAS capabilities and the further development of RPAS capabilities; 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhancement of the Air Corps' fleet with the addition of a fixed wing aircraft with strategic reach capability, and two additional medium lift rotary wing aircraft for enhanced Defence Forces support and priority ATCA taskings; 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ultimate replacement of the existing medium lift helicopter fleet with a fleet of eight super-medium helicopters; 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deepening Defence Forces involvement in relevant national and international forums to enhance capability development in the cyber domain; 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A further 100 additional specialist personnel as part a Joint Cyber Defence Command managing Cyber Defence, Defence IT Services, and CIS Services; 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishment of SOF Air and Maritime Task Groups, including associated logistics, to be based at Casement Aerodrome and Haulbowline as part of the planned increase in the ARW/SOF establishment and enhancement of SOF capabilities; 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthening Military Intelligence capabilities and the establishment of a Joint Military Intelligence Service in the context of a revised 	

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
		Capabilities (cont.)*	<p>mandate underpinned by new legislation (as proposed in Chapter 7);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The establishment of an Intelligence School, with shared programmes, which would facilitate enhanced cooperation and joint training opportunities between Military Intelligence and their Garda counterparts; and ○ The development of relevant military capabilities to counter hybrid activity where military capability is required and to contribute to national resilience. 	
15	<p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p> <p>6.11</p>	Capabilities	<p>Within the context of a decision being taken by Government that the capability requirements of the Defence Forces need to step up to LOA 3, the following is recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By 2040 the Infantry element of the Army would have a substantial mechanised component offering state of the art force protection, communications, ISTAR and firepower. All Infantry units would have full organic lift capability, ideally mechanised. Combat Support elements would be modernised, with both Artillery regiments and Cavalry squadrons being fully interoperable to NATO standards, and the land force would have the appropriate level of combat service support elements; ○ By 2040 the Naval Service would comprise a balanced fleet of at least 12 ships, supported by appropriate technology, as part of a joint Defence Forces structure; ○ As part of a national Air Defence Plan, the Air Corps would develop an air combat and intercept capability through the acquisition of a squadron of jet combat aircraft, allied to the development of associated operational, infrastructure and support arrangements; ○ The overseas deployment of combat aircraft, pilots and support personnel to provide organic intra-theatre mobility based on tactical transport helicopters. Deployed forces would also have an organic helicopter combat SAR capability armed and equipped to operate in hostile environments; ○ A further 200 additional specialist personnel working under a matured Joint Cyber Defence Command; and ○ ARW/SOF would have an organic self-sustainment capability, which would include dedicated combat helicopter assets to insert, operate and extract from mission areas. 	53 - 54

No.	Section and Heading	Recommendation	Page No.
Chapter 7 – Shaping the Future – Defence Forces’ Structures			
16	<p style="text-align: center;">7.2</p> <p>Defence Forces – High Level Command Structures *</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7.3</p> <p>Future Force Structures</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7.4</p> <p>Service/Component Structures</p>	<p>That the high level Command and Control structures of the Defence Forces be aligned to international best practice, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The creation of a CHOD, supported by a Vice CHOD, with the appropriate military command and control authority of the Defence Forces at the strategic level, including the ability to assign OPCOM, OPCON, TACOM and TACON. <li>○ The creation of a Defence Forces’ Headquarters that will report to the CHOD, who will be assisted by the A/CHOD and the Head of Transformation. <li>○ The creation of three Service Chiefs, and Deputy Service Chiefs, for the land, air and maritime forces, and a Joint Force Commander, who should also be the Vice-CHOD, supported by a Deputy Commander. This high-level leadership team may be formalised as a Command Board or similar title, and should support the CHOD in managing issues connected to the development of the Joint Force. <li>○ The Army, Air Corps and Naval Service should become services, have service headquarters, and have parity of esteem. <li>○ That the SEAC position, currently being trialed, is made permanent for the purposes of bringing the expertise and experience of the senior NCO appointee to the top table, including being a member of the Defence Staff. Additionally, each Service Chief should be supported by a service Sergeant Major/Warrant Officer who would sit on their respective service staff. <li>○ That the supporting joint functions are staffed by all three services, from all ranks. <li>○ That the ARW should be renamed IRL SOF and include permanent Air and Maritime Task Groups in Casement Aerodrome and Haulbowline Naval Base. Implementation of the current White Paper Project Report should also be expedited. 	74
17	<p style="text-align: center;">7.4</p> <p>Service/Component Structures</p>	<p>That the Army be urgently restructured by completing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Chief of Defence to initiate an immediate force design process assisted by external experts with access to international military expertise, and to include a detailed force design process. <li>○ The creation of a more agile and flexible force structure that can meet current and future operational taskings. 	74

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That the future disposition and structures of the Army be regionally balanced. 	
18	7.2	Defence Forces – High Level Command Structures	<p>That jointness be inculcated throughout the Defence Forces by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritising training institutions, with an emphasis on routine joint exercises to prove future force operational capabilities for national defence and overseas operations. ○ The introduction of joint operational and leadership training courses at junior and senior level for both officers and NCOs. 	74
19	7.6	Future Cyber and Counter-Hybrid Structures	<p>That the Defence Forces seek to further integrate with whole-of-government processes, with a focus on contributing to national security and national resilience through ATCP and ATCA operations.</p>	74
20	7.5	Military Intelligence *	<p>The modernisation of Military Intelligence, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The role and functions of Military Intelligence be urgently clarified and underpinned by appropriate legislation within the context of a coherent national intelligence architecture. ○ The development of an overarching legal and governance framework to ensure optimum coordination and collaboration between the Defence Forces and An Garda Síochána on intelligence matters. ○ A fully joint approach to Intelligence within the Defence Forces under the Joint Force Commander. ○ Appropriate arrangements in relation to oversight in relation to intelligence should be set out in the legislation. 	74 - 75
21	7.6	Future Cyber and Counter-Hybrid Structures	<p>The enhancement of Defence Forces structures across the cyber domain, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The creation of a Joint Cyber Defence Command that should manage, Defence Forces IT Services, CIS Services and Cyber Defence. ○ Incorporating practical lessons identified from comparator countries and EU Member States’ maturing cyber commands. ○ Updating and publishing a cyber defence strategy in line with best international practice and standards. ○ Increased civil-military engagement across Government on the development of appropriate structures and processes for countering hybrid warfare, learning from current international experience. 	75
22	7.7	Future Military Police Service *	<p>The creation of a Joint Military Police Service, independent of the operational chain of command,</p>	75

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
			with enhanced electronic and analytical supports, and with oversight, inspection and complaints mechanisms also established.	
23	7.4	Service/Component Structures	Modernisation of the Naval Service Diving Section with the establishment of a Defence Forces' School of Diving, and a diving safety office reporting directly to the Chief of the Navy.	75
24	7.8	Training and Education Structures	The development of a National Defence Academy and an Apprentice School to support a future tech-enabled force.	75
25	7.11	Veterans Affairs	The establishment of an Office of Veterans' Affairs to coordinate veteran supports, and provide advice and assistance to veterans and their families.	75
26	7.12	Disposition of the Defence Forces	That a focused and detailed review of the Defence estate be carried out by appropriately qualified professionals prior to decisions on the optimum future disposition of the Defence Forces.	75
Chapter 8 – People as the Defence Forces' Key Strategic Resource – Section 1				
27	8.1.2	Strategic HR	Implementation of a comprehensive approach to Strategic HR within the Defence Forces with, in particular, the following enablers put in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The establishment of a Strategic HR Change Leadership Team, to be led by the externally recruited Head of Transformation; ○ The introduction of a talent management system and new career streams; ○ The conduct of a comprehensive exercise that maps current patterns of career progression and develops a career progression route map for all roles, starting with entry level and those roles that are experiencing higher attrition rates; and ○ All personnel should have a personal Continuous Professional Development plan and at least annual meetings with their commander to review their performance and competencies. 	86
	8.1.3	Career Progression		
28	8.1.5	Training	The development of an organisational leadership and development capability within the Defence Forces of the future to lead the transformation agenda.	86
29	8.1.5	Training	The creation of a permanent training establishment and provision of greater flexibility for managers, within the overall establishment number, to allocate staff across formations and ranks.	86
30	8.1.5	Training	Development and resourcing of remote and distance learning solutions to provide greater use of ICT-based training and education both in the home and from regional garrison locations or hot desks.	86

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
31	8.1.3	Career Progression and Talent Management	The creation of a new enlisted rank of Lance Corporal in the Army and the Air Corps.	86
32	8.1.3	Career Progression and Talent Management	The creation of a structure to provide a recognised career path for Naval divers that permits rank progression for enlisted personnel within the Naval Service Diving Section.	86
33	8.1.3	Career Progression and Talent Management	Provision of a specialist Military Police career stream for all ranks, with adequate career progression opportunities.	86
34	8.1.4	Promotion Systems	Re-development of promotion systems to ensure they are open, competitive and entirely merit-based, while the necessity for all officers and NCOs to undertake long career courses needs to be examined.	87
35	8.1.4	Promotion Systems	There should be objective, competitive selection processes designed for career course selection that recognise high performing individuals and avoids creating a 'box ticking' culture.	87
36	8.1.5	Training	There should be equal emphasis and access to career training and professional military education for officers, NCOs and reservists.	87
37	8.1.5	Training	Service specific courses need to be introduced at a junior and senior level, with joint courses and training where required at a senior level.	87
38	8.1.4	Promotion Systems	A practice should be developed of actively managing the retention of valuable members of the Defence Forces who have decided that promotion is not for them, or whose career stream has a restricted rank structure.	87
Chapter 8 – People as the Defence Forces' Key Strategic Resource – Section 2				
39	8.2.2	Culture	<p>A fundamental cultural change process, using the most up-to-date approaches, should be undertaken; and the Defence Forces should ensure early implementation of the following high profile immediate impact changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creation of a full-time senior rank position of Gender Advisor (OF-5) with a dedicated staffing resource and full time co-ordinators for staff networks such as the Women's Network and the Defend with Pride group; ○ Creation of a mechanism to ensure there is female participation and input at all meetings at General Staff level (or the equivalent under the proposed new structures); ○ Full integration of all dining facilities, on land and at sea; and 	100
	8.2.4	Female Participation		
	8.2.5	Gender		

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regular climate and continuous attitude surveys to assess morale, command climate and underlying culture on an ongoing basis. 	
40	8.2.4	Female Participation	<p>Development of expanded recruitment channels with objectives set for the recruitment and participation of under-represented groups, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Setting an overall female participation rate of 35% to be achieved through a combination of entry-level inductions (Cadet and General Service) and civilianisation, as well as direct entry into more senior, and specialist, positions across the organisation; ○ Consultation with the communities of under-represented groups to discuss the attractions and barriers to service in the Defence Forces; ○ Adoption of measures to enable easier access to Irish citizenship for those who serve in the Defence Forces; and ○ Development of a profile of current serving personnel as an essential starting point to underpinning longer-term approaches to strategic HR and ensuring the Defence Forces is more reflective of the diversity of Irish society. 	100 - 101
	8.2.6	Diversity *		
41	8.2.3	Morale	<p>Consideration of the gender perspective should become mandatory in all aspects of decision making across the Defence Forces and particularly in relation to HR practices, promotion processes, procurement and development of infrastructure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Immediate removal of gendered rules, regulations and standards that are unfavourable to women, and others who do not fit a perceived 'norm', including a review and modernisation of grooming standards for both men and women in line with trends in other armed forces and Irish society; ○ A guaranteed minimum female participation rate of 35% on all command and other relevant career courses by 2025; ○ Identification and removal of practices around access to promotion opportunities and courses which, in effect, indirectly discriminate against women or other groups such as, for example, primary carers; ○ Fitness standards should be reviewed and updated to ensure they are relative to accepted standards for females and modern military roles; ○ Women in the Defence Forces should be supplied with and have ready access, without delay or special request, to clothing and equipment that 	101
	8.2.4	Female Participation		
	8.2.5	Gender		

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
			<p>are designed for females and, as such, are fit for purpose;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Immediate extension of the Defence Forces' Women's Network to include female members of the Reserve; and ○ Establishment of a female mentoring programme to allow women in the Defence Forces to benefit from the experience of identified role models and mentors. 	
42	8.2.6	Diversity	Gender, diversity and unconscious bias training should become mandatory across all ranks of the Defence Forces.	101
43	8.2.2	Culture	The development of a statement of the Defence Forces' vision of its role and value to the people of Ireland.	101
44	8.2.7	Grievance Processes	Implementation of an administrative solution without delay to enable the ODF to investigate complaints received more than 12 months after the date of the alleged action, or the date the complainant became aware of the alleged action.	101
Chapter 8 – People as the Defence Forces' Key Strategic Resource – Section 3				
45	8.3.2	Trends in numbers, incl. recruitment and retention	Increased use of direct entry recruitment to fill specialist posts with appropriately adjusted training and physical fitness requirements.	117
46	8.3.3	Family Friendly Measures	<p>Urgent reform of existing working arrangements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any necessary legislative and organisational changes to allow for flexible service and flexible work practices; ○ Extension and enhancement of existing family friendly policies to the greatest practicable extent, including for overseas postings, and recognition of the challenges faced by single parents and parents of children with disabilities, amongst others; and ○ Introduction of a non-financial 'labour hours budget' for all managers. 	117
	8.3.4	Flexible Working Arrangements		
	8.3.5	Working Time Directive		
47	8.3.5	Working Time Directive *	The expeditious removal of the blanket exclusion of the Defence Forces from the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 subject to the application of the derogations permitted by the Working Time Directive.	117
48	8.3.7	Entry to Officer Ranks for Enlisted Personnel	Establishment of an Officer Training Centre comprising the existing Cadet School and a new Officer Candidate School which would conduct Potential Officers Courses, Late Entry Officers Courses and Reserve Officers Courses every two years.	117
49	8.3.8	Healthcare *	Urgent reform of medical services within the Defence Forces to include:	117

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation of measures to extend provision of private healthcare to all enlisted personnel in the Defence Forces; ○ Completion of all outstanding reviews into medical services within a 12-18 month period and the implementation processes started immediately; and ○ Extension of HIQA's remit to include the Defence Forces' medical services. 	
Chapter 8 – People as the Defence Forces' Key Strategic Resource – Section 4				
50	8.4.2	Visibility of “The Total Package”	Greater transparency of the wider benefits of membership of the Defence Forces should become a central feature of future recruitment campaigns, which should be supported by external expertise.	125
51	8.4.3	Pay Structures	<p>That the equity of existing pay and allowance structures be enhanced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removing the requirement for a 3 Star Private/Able Seaman to ‘mark time’ for the first three years at that rank; ○ Ensuring that all personnel of Private 3 Star/Able Seaman rank are paid the full rate of MSA applicable to the rank; ○ Providing immediate access to the Sea-going Service Commitment Scheme to direct entry personnel in the Navy; ○ Replacing the existing sea-going allowances with less complex sea-going duty measures; and ○ Introducing Long Service Increments to the pay scales of all ranks of enlisted personnel. 	125
52	8.4.3	Pay Structures	On the basis that all personnel should, in the first instance, be paid the full rate of MSA applicable to their rank, MSA should be abolished and the full applicable rate integrated into core pay.	125
53	8.4.4	Pay Review and Pay Bargaining	The introduction of a mechanism to provide for ongoing review of the application of existing specialist pay rates and allowances to groups and categories of military personnel, and to make recommendations, within public pay policy parameters, where adjustments are required.	125
54	8.4.5	Pay Bargaining and ICTU	PDF Representative Associations should be facilitated if they wish to pursue associate membership of ICTU.	125
Chapter 9 – The Reserve Defence Force				
55	9.2	Roles and Purpose of the RDF	A new high level vision be articulated for the RDF that clarifies its core purpose as being to support the PDF in all its roles.	133

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
56	9.2	Roles and Purpose of the RDF	Decisions to deploy RDF personnel should be taken by the unit commanders, and should not be limited by the overarching policy as at present.	133
57	9.3	Structure of the RDF	A detailed regeneration plan for the RDF, with clear and specific timelines, be developed and published by the end of 2022 setting out how a reformed RDF will be operationalised and funded.	133
58	9.3	Structure of the RDF	The CHOD be supported by a Reserve Assistant Chief of Defence and that each Service Chief should be supported by a Reserve Assistant Chief of Service.	133
59	9.3	Structure of the RDF	The establishment of the RDF should include, at a minimum, an Air Force Reserve of 200 and a Navy Reserve of 400.	133
60	9.3	Structure of the RDF	The Army Reserve establishment should stand at 3,900 with a ratio of 50:50 between Combat / Combat Support and Combat Service Support	133
61	9.3	Structure of the RDF	<p>A joint Office of Reserve Affairs (ORA), with senior staff from RDF and with support from the PDF, be established which should report regularly to the CHOD and senior commanders on all reserve matters. Command authority should remain with the integrated PDF/RDF unit commanders in conformity with the SFC but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The deployment of RDF personnel should be audited annually and documented by the ORA, with appropriate and effective follow-up, including in commanders' annual appraisals, to ensure best practice and accountability; and ○ The ORA should provide an annual progress report to the Minister for Defence on the implementation of the RDF regeneration plan. 	133
62	9.4	Structure of the RDF	The role of reservists be highlighted and embedded in the curriculum of education courses for senior NCOs and officers.	133
63	9.4	Staffing	The Defence Forces should urgently develop revamped and efficient recruitment processes for the FLR, the Army Reserve, the Air Force Reserve and the Naval Reserve. For the Army, Air and Naval Reserves, a maximum recruitment time of eight weeks, from application to initiation, should be set and a fast track system should be developed for those who wish to join the FLR on discharge from the PDF.	134
64	9.4	Staffing	The Defence Forces should develop a clear and focused recruitment plan, with clearly identified milestones and annual reviews, targeted at meeting the full establishment of the RDF within eight years to include recruitment of specialists, Combat Support and Combat Service Support personnel. A part of its recruitment plan, the Defence Forces should:	134
	9.5	Capabilities		

No.	Section and Heading		Recommendation	Page No.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that the RDF fully reflects the diversity of contemporary Irish society; ○ Clarify the specific skillsets where targeted Reserve recruitment would be most likely to yield positive benefits and build the outcome into a sustained recruitment effort; ○ Provide for increased utilisation of direct entry commissions and direct entry at NCO level to the RDF, including an expanded use of direct entry mechanisms to all services and Corps; ○ Create lateral entry mechanisms for those with prior foreign military experience who wish to join the RDF; and ○ Focus the recruitment plan around attracting highly skilled people to staff an expanded range of clearly defined non-combat and specialist functions, as well as general recruitment to conventional combat units 	
65	9.4	Staffing *	Employment protection legislation should be considered and discussed with employer representative bodies and Trade Unions to protect reservists and ensure their availability when needed.	134
Chapter 10 – Funding the Defence Forces of the Future				
66	10.7	Level of Ambition	That the Government and Oireachtas urgently address the need to define a clear level of ambition for the major roles of the Defence Forces: defence of the State, its people and its resources, overseas missions, ATCP and ATCA.	143
67	10.7	Level of Ambition	That the chosen level of ambition be clearly and credibly linked to the budget provided annually and over the period to 2030.	143
68	10.7	Level of Ambition	That the forthcoming cycle of Defence Reviews be based on a coherent and consistent approach to defence policy, level of ambition, required capability and budget.	143
69	10.7	Level of Ambition	That consideration be given to a step up to LOA 2, as described in this report, in the short term pending the more detailed policy debate and decision required for higher levels of ambition.	143

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Commission on the Defence Forces was appointed by the Government on 15 December 2020 with a mandate to recommend appropriate capabilities, structures and staffing of the Permanent and Reserve Defence Forces, both for the immediate future and beyond 2030, in order to ensure that they remain agile, flexible and adaptive. The Commission presents this report to the Minister for Defence in fulfilment of this mandate.

In accordance with its Terms of Reference (TOR), the Commission was guided and informed in its work by current Defence policy as set out in the White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019 while having regard to the level of funding provided by the Government for Defence. The full TOR are set out in Appendix 1.

The Commission members collectively brought to this task a wide range of experience and expertise, from Ireland and abroad. In addition, from the outset of its work, the Commission sought input from interested and informed organisations and individuals as well as from the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence. This has led the Commission to receive approximately 480 submissions to its public consultation and to hold meetings with a wide range of bodies including the UN Department for Peace Operations, the EU External Action Service, NATO Defence Policy and Planning Division, the European Defence Agency, the Defence Forces Representative Associations as well as with a number of government departments, public agencies and other bodies. The Commission is deeply grateful for the scale and quality of this input, which was freely given by so many people and organisations.

The Commission also sponsored two webinars hosted by the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) and the Institute for International and European Affairs (IIEA), which provided a useful platform to debate the wider issues around the Commission's work and a route for the academic community to provide valuable input to the process. The Commission is grateful to the RIA and IIEA, and in particular to Prof. Andrew Cottey, UCC, and Prof. Ben Tonra, UCD, for chairing these webinars.

The Commission met directly with over 1,000 Defence Forces' personnel of all ranks, including civilian employees, in their barracks and bases throughout the country. This engagement was open, honest and very informative and left a strong impression on Commission members as to the quality and dedication of our soldiers, sailors, air crew and civilian staff. Many of those to whom the Commission spoke reported a strong sense of crisis in the Defence Forces, which is also reflected in some public commentary. One immediate cause is the current understaffing in all three services, but it is clear that there are also deeper factors involved, many of which are set out in some detail in the following chapters. Having said this, these interactions impressed upon members that while there is a recognition amongst Defence

Forces' personnel that there are issues and challenges, there is also a serious desire for change. Taken together, this underlines the need for clear decisions and urgent action, and the Commission believes that this report provides a basis for both.

Like many domestic and multi-national organisations in Ireland, the Defence Forces' key success factor is its people. The ability to attract, train, lead, motivate, retain and deploy people with the ambition, skill and commitment required to defend and maintain peace in very challenging situations is the key to success. Good strategic leadership requires a clear focus on culture, particularly in view of its ability to support or undermine even the best of strategies. Defining a suitable culture and maintaining it is a key responsibility of senior leadership. In this regard, a striking initial perception formed by the members of the Commission is the high calibre and commitment of the people in the Defence Forces, the limitations placed by many aspects of the current culture and the absence of progress on planned changes.

A recurring theme throughout much of this engagement has been a widespread concern about the paucity of real debate on defence and security matters in this country. The Commission concurs with this view and hopes that this report may help to fuel a more informed and grounded debate on these matters. The dedicated members of the Defence Forces deserve at least the clarity of direction that may emerge from such a process, and the security of the people of this country may depend upon it.

Another theme that featured in the public consultation, the webinars and in meetings with Defence Forces' members, as well as with the most senior staff of the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence, was the perception of dysfunction in the relationship between the two sides of the 'Defence Organisation'⁶. This perception, whatever its accuracy, is of very long-standing and will require determined and visionary leadership to overcome. The Commission is glad to note the palpable sense of a new start in this regard and an openness to rethinking how this relationship should be structured and managed. This report should contribute to this process within the TOR of the Commission, which did not extend beyond the Defence Forces themselves. The Commission is aware of an organisation review underway in the Department and hopes that this too can contribute positively to putting relations between the Department and the Defence Forces on a positive, efficient and effective footing. This will be essential in order to ensure clarity of purpose and high morale in both organisations.

Of course, the report of the Commission will only have an impact to the extent that it is actually implemented. This is, in the first instance, a matter for Government to determine, particularly in view of the significant human, structural, financial and legislative implications

⁶ The term 'Defence Organisation' refers to the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces.

of some recommendations. Thereafter, an effective implementation process, with the necessary external supports, will be vital to deal comprehensively with the wide range of recommendations contained in this report. The Commission hopes that the necessary top level commitment and resources will be provided to ensure that this is done on foot of the Government's decisions in relation to this report.

In the following chapters, the Commission has endeavoured to structure its report in a logical manner, starting with the security and threat context, and the national policy framed in response to that context, then going on to offer a vision and detailed recommendations on the future Defence Forces that is needed to cope with these threats and fulfil the roles envisaged by Government policy.

- Chapter 2 presents a short outline of the current security and threat environment;
- Chapter 3 summarises current Defence policy as set out in the White Paper 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019;
- Chapter 4 sets out the Commission's reflections on some key contextual issues in relation to the main roles of the Defence Forces;
- Chapter 5 sets out a high level vision for the future Defence Forces and considers the critically important issue of the level of ambition for the Defence Forces, which is returned to in subsequent chapters;
- Chapters 6, 7 and 8 deal respectively with the capabilities, structures and staffing of the Defence Forces, and primarily the Permanent Defence Force, as required by the TOR;
- Chapter 9 deals specifically with Reserve Defence Force structures, capabilities and staffing;
- Chapter 10 addresses the key matters of funding and staffing the Defence Forces of the future;
- Chapter 11 sets out final conclusions and comments on implementation.

Chapter 2: The Security Context

The Threat and Risk Environment looking out to 2030 (and beyond)

2.1 Introduction

As laid out in the Government's White Paper on Defence 2015 (and the White Paper Update 2019), Ireland's international, regional and domestic security and risk environments are characterised by a variety of complex, evolving, interdependent and partially unpredictable threats and risks. Noting the increased blurring of lines between external and internal security, the White Paper takes a broad approach in describing forms of aggression, threat actors, and risks of relevancy to Ireland's security. They include increased use of hybrid aggression, cyber-attacks aimed at manipulating systems or stealing data, terrorism, proliferation of weapons to hostile actors, organised crime, espionage, energy insecurity, threats to free trade, climate related risks, emergencies and natural disasters, conflicts related to resource scarcity, and illegal exploitation of Ireland's maritime resources. While stressing that the risk of a conventional military attack on Ireland remains low, the White Paper highlights the instability on Europe's Southern and South-Eastern flank as a cause for concern and Ireland as a potential target due to its profile as an EU Member State and active participant in multi-national peace support operations. Domestically, it highlights cyber vulnerabilities and a remaining threat from domestic paramilitary groups, which increasingly liaise with criminal gangs and continuously plan and attempt to carry out attacks in Northern Ireland. The White Paper Update acknowledges too that while the precise security implications of Brexit remain difficult to predict, there is the possibility of negative security impacts.

The current threat and risk environment and the variety in the Defence Forces' designated roles require the Defence Forces to be able to multi-task. Versatility, flexibility, and resiliency will be required to adapt to change and to react, learn and recover from predicted as well as unpredicted threats and risks. Moreover, it places a high value on the ability to collaborate across service branches, government agencies, societal sectors, and/or national borders, as evidenced by, for example, the Covid-19 pandemic.

While the threat and risk environment remains complex and partially unpredictable, as described in the White Paper, the Commission wishes to highlight one overarching trend of unpredictability and four interrelated trends of particular importance in shaping the future security environment in which the Defence Forces must navigate. First, increased great power competition. Second, continued instability on Europe's borders and less United States involvement in containing it. Third, a continued blurring of the lines between internal and external security, accelerated by the increased use of hybrid forms of aggression against Western democracies. Fourth, a more demanding environment for troops deployed overseas.

In the following four sections, the Commission considers these trends and their implications for Ireland and the Defence Forces.

2.2 Increased great power competition and geostrategic change

Ireland's global geostrategic environment, looking out to 2030, will be characterised by intensified great power competition. The notion of a 'strategic partnership' between Russia and the West was upended by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, its support to separatist forces in Ukraine, and current overt threats to Ukraine, and heightened concern about hybrid threats to Western democracies. In this regard, the European Council Conclusions of June 2021⁷ stated "... the European Council stresses the need for a firm and coordinated response by the EU and its Member States to any further malign, illegal and disruptive activity by Russia, making full use of all instruments at the EU's disposal, and ensuring coordination with partners". In its Conclusions of 24 January 2022⁸, the Foreign Affairs Council said that it "condemns Russia's continued aggressive actions and threats against Ukraine, and it calls on Russia to de-escalate, abide by international law and engage constructively in dialogue ...". It reaffirmed the EU's full commitment to the core principles on which European security is built and said "their violation by Russia is an obstacle to a common and indivisible security space in Europe and threatens peace and security on our continent."

The implications of China's growing military, technological, political, and economic muscle for the security of Western democracies are contested and only beginning to emerge and be understood. China's rise represents economic opportunities and China is a vital actor when it comes to tackling global challenges like proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), regulation of Emerging Disruptive Technology (EDT), climate change, environmental degradation, and communicable diseases. At the same time, China's increasingly strong position in a number of EDTs, as well as targeted strategic investments

Emerging Disruptive Technology (EDT) - The White Paper does not define EDT, but it is commonly described as comprising arenas like big data, Artificial Intelligence, autonomous capabilities, space, cloud technologies, hypersonic and new missile technologies, quantum technologies and biotechnologies, and human augmentation/enhancement.

and acquisition of critical infrastructure abroad, creates problematic dependencies. Like Russia, China leverages hybrid means in pursuit of its perceived interest. The Commission has noted that in a joint contribution to the European Council in March 2019, titled "EU-China – A strategic outlook"⁹, the European Commission and the High Representative/Vice President stated that "China's increasing military capabilities coupled with its comprehensive vision and ambition to have the technologically most advanced armed forces by 2050 present security issues for the EU, already in a short to mid-term perspective. Cross-sectoral hybrid threats including information operations, and large military

Hybrid threats - The White Paper Update describes hybrid threats as "... the mixture of coercive and subversive activity, conventional and unconventional methods (i.e. diplomatic, military, economic, technological), which can be used in a coordinated manner by state or non-state actors to achieve specific objectives, while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare." A range of cyber-enabled intelligence activities are also being employed as part of this hybrid activity.

⁷ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50763/2425-06-21-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/53949/st05591-en22.pdf>

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>

exercises not only undermine trust, but also challenge the EU's security and must be addressed in the context of our mutual relationship."

In an era of intensified great power competition, Ireland can expect:

- A growing risk of becoming a target of hybrid aggression either against Ireland itself or the EU as a whole.
- A growing risk that Ireland's land, air, maritime and cyber domains become vectors of attacks on, or threatening moves against, Ireland's neighbours and European partners.
- A growing risk of becoming 'sandwiched' between United States and Chinese interests and forced to take sides in connection with areas of strategic competition, such as technology procurement, 5G networks and technology governance. Some of the current responses to these questions show a likely trend whereby Ireland and other EU Member States might increasingly choose to collectively address these security dilemmas together with, and through, the EU even where they are traditionally the preserve of national security and national sovereign decision-making processes.
- A growing ambition of the EU and some of its Member States to pursue strategic autonomy and for the EU to continue aiming to become a credible security actor on the global stage.
- A growing risk that Ireland's technology industry and IT-infrastructure becomes a proxy battlefield for competing great powers.
- A growing need for Ireland to consider the impact of (and responses to) geostrategic change and great power rivalry on the State's bilateral engagement with a post-Brexit United Kingdom (both North-South and East-West); its strong trans-Atlantic relationship with the United States; and a growing need for deeper engagement with the EU on common security challenges; as well as the practical interplay between these three important actors for Irish interests.

2.3 Continued instability on Europe's borders

Conflicts on Europe's Southern and South Eastern flanks will continue to be sources of instability. Regional conflicts and civil wars in Middle Eastern and North African countries, state failure, corruption, lack of good governance and ethnic and religious tensions will fuel armed conflicts. Population growth, youth unemployment and climate related environmental degradation will continue to drive and likely increase irregular migration, putting pressure on EU coherence and solidarity, and providing fertile ground for organised criminal networks, human smugglers, and terrorist groups collaborating opportunistically across borders. Regional conflicts and battlefields on Europe's Eastern and Southern borders will continue to attract foreign fighters – right wing extremists and jihadists – who might subsequently return to European homelands and represent a terrorist threat. Jihadists and right-wing extremists will piggy back off each other to recruit and incite violence. Right wing extremists will exploit migration streams to propagandise and polarise.

Increased involvement of non-status quo powers in conflicts on Europe's periphery, as currently witnessed in Syria and Libya, and deployment of proxies and Private Military Companies (PMC) adds complexity and risk of escalation.

As the United States becomes increasingly focused on China as a strategic challenger, Europe may no longer be able to rely on American military support to handle regional conflicts and crises.

The Commission notes the solidarity clause (Article 222) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) which is a mechanism designed to prevent or address the consequences of terrorist attacks, natural disasters and man-made disasters. This mechanism remains outside the remit of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), but may utilise CSDP structures when implemented. The Commission further notes Article 42(7) of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) introduced a 'mutual assistance clause'. This clause stipulates that in the event that a Member State is "the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power", in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and without prejudice to the specific defence 'character' of each Member State (for example, the neutral status of certain Member States or NATO commitments). The clause allows Member States to offer both military and civilian support to their counterpart invoking the clause. Being limited to the obligation of aid and assistance, Article 42(7) does not carry the same obligations associated with defence alliances such as NATO. Each Member State is responsible for determining its contribution on the basis of what they deem to be necessary, which does not necessarily mean the deployment of military assets.¹⁰ The mutual assistance clause is further clarified in the Protocol¹¹ to the Lisbon Treaty - sometimes referred to as the Irish Protocol - which states: "It will be for Member States - including Ireland, acting in a spirit of solidarity and without prejudice to its traditional policy of military neutrality - to determine the nature of aid or assistance to be provided to a Member State which is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of armed aggression on its territory".

In an era of continued instability on Europe's borders, Ireland can expect:

- Continued instability spill-over from Europe's Eastern and Southern flanks, including organised crime, terrorism, and irregular migration that challenges EU cohesion and solidarity.
- Growing demand to contribute to increasingly complex and operationally challenging peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond as part of self-reliant and self-sustainable deployed European military forces.
- Increasing competition for energy resources and raw material.

¹⁰ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/573285/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)573285_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/573285/EPRS_BRI(2016)573285_EN.pdf)

¹¹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22013A0302\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22013A0302(01)&from=EN)

2.4 Continued blurring of the lines between internal and external security

Global interconnectedness, for example in trade, travel and information, will combine with intensified use of hybrid means of aggression to sustain the trend of blurring lines between internal and external security. Progressive digitisation of societies will increase vulnerability to attacks. Hostile state actors will pursue their perceived interests in geographically unbounded ways via stealing or compromising data, spreading misinformation, aiming to polarise societies and undermine trust in governments and the democratic process.

Online global extremist sub-cultures will continue to propagandise and radicalise in geographically unbounded ways. Cross-over between domestic paramilitary groups and international criminal networks dealing in drugs, human smuggling and weapons represents a continued concern. Like hostile state actors, non-state actors may deploy hybrid means to polarise democratic societies and undermine governance and trust. Countering such threats calls for a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach, which includes, for example, defence, law enforcement, security services, telecommunications, critical infrastructure, economics and trade. The different sectors need to strengthen their ability to cooperate fluently to deter and defend against hybrid threats.

In an era of continued blurring of the lines between internal and external security, Ireland can expect:

- A continued need for a whole-of-government approach and the ability to collaborate across sectoral and agency borders.
- International intelligence cooperation to remain critical.
- A growing need for effective foreign and domestic intelligence capabilities, appropriate collaboration between the two, and a suitable framework for democratic oversight.

2.5 A more demanding peacekeeping environment

Ireland has an established policy of active engagement in EU and UN mandated peace building and peace support efforts. The future peace support environment in which deployed personnel will operate is likely to become more demanding, partly as a consequence of increased great power competition that plays out via armed and empowered local proxies or PMCs.

Erosion of global norms, proliferation of weapons and EDTs to non-state actors and networks, technology transfer between terrorist networks (e.g. drones and improvised explosive devices) and opportunistic collaboration between terrorist groups and criminal networks will combine to present tougher environments.

Climate change will be a driver of conflicts due to environmental degradation and resource scarcity. It will also impact on the operational environment of the Defence Forces, demanding that future personnel be trained and equipped to operate under more extreme climate and weather conditions.

In an era of a more demanding peacekeeping environment, Ireland can expect:

- A continued international need for land, air and sea forces to contribute to peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations.
- A tougher future operational environment due to man-made and natural factors, subjecting deployed personnel to higher risks and harsher conditions.
- Sustained political and public support for such missions will rest on adequate force protection, which will require improved intelligence, situational awareness, and special capabilities including air lift, special operations forces and extraction capabilities.

2.6 Conclusions

The Commission regards the four trends discussed above as particularly significant. Yet, as noted in the White Paper, the security environment is characterised by volatility and unpredictability. The proliferation of state and non-state actors and the growing interconnectedness, including in the information sphere, creates an inherently unpredictable system, in which national and global shocks and surprises at strategic, operational and tactical level may occur despite the best intelligence and analysis. Therefore, societal and organisational resilience is a critical asset. In areas where redundancy is unaffordable, credible plans to surge capacity must be in place. The Commission considers the Reserve Defence Force to be a critical asset in this regard.

Chapter 3: The Current Defence Policy Framework

3.1 Introduction

As set out in the Strategy Statement of the Department of Defence and Defence Forces, and repeated in the Commission's Terms of Reference, Ireland's high level Defence goal is to:

- Provide for the military defence of the State;
- Contribute to national and international peace and security; and
- Fulfil all other roles assigned by Government.

The brief summary of current defence policy set out below is not exhaustive as it is not intended to repeat here the comprehensive outline of these issues in the White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019. The purpose is simply to provide a brief outline of the current defence policy framework as this forms an essential backdrop for the Commission's work.

3.2 The White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019

The current defence policy framework is elaborated in some detail in the White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019. These policy statements include an assessment of the security environment and set out key capability and human resource decisions in relation to the Defence Forces.

National Security: The White Paper states that a key goal of policy is that Ireland retains credible military capabilities to meet anticipated future threats to the State's security and to ensure that these capabilities are flexible and responsive to a changing environment. It notes that following a review of foreign policy, it was confirmed that Ireland will continue to maintain the policy of military neutrality. It views the requirement to defend the State from a conventional attack as a contingency, i.e. "unlikely but possible", and says that the Government has decided that there is a continuing need to retain armed forces to exercise the right of self-defence. It also notes the challenge of balancing expenditure on specific military capabilities against the risk of not being in a position to respond comprehensively if required to do so. It concludes that maintaining the military capabilities for a worst case scenario would be prohibitively expensive and therefore "prudent defence planning involves maintaining an appropriate level of capability that can be enhanced". All of this is placed within a broader concept of national security that encompasses threats such as natural disasters, cyber security, pandemics and threats to the State's economy.

In relation to domestic security specifically, the White Paper sets out the key responsibilities of other departments and agencies including the Departments of Justice; Transport; Environment, Climate and Communications; and Agriculture, Food and the Marine; as well as the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and An Garda Síochána. It also identifies the important role of the Defence Forces in support of these agencies, including a number of taskings in relation to aid to the civil power (ATCP) assistance to An Garda Síochána and the very demanding fisheries protection activities of the multi-tasked Naval Service and Air Corps.

Global and Regional Security: Ireland's strong support for the multilateral system of collective security, and the primary role of the UN Security Council, is underlined in the White Paper, which also notes the increasing trend of the UN mandating regional organisations, including the EU, to manage operations on its behalf. The growing requirement for a comprehensive approach to international crisis management, post conflict stabilisation and security sector reform is noted in order to deal with new more complicated threats. A commitment is made to develop both civil and military capability across the full spectrum of activity in support of such an approach.

The development of more formal bilateral relations with other states is identified as an increasing feature of Ireland's defence and crisis management arrangements. The White Paper states that it is the intention "to develop in concert with partners and like-minded states, initiatives that are important to Ireland in protecting our sovereign rights and advancing our sovereign interests in accordance with our principles and values". A commitment is made to build on this trend including through exploring the appointment of Defence Attachés and agreeing bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with relevant Member States. The Commission believes that international liaison and co-operation between the Defence Forces and the armed forces of other countries should be enhanced and strengthened with the immediate creation of a Defence Attaché network. This cohort of personnel, based in locations of strategic importance to Ireland, can provide vital and timely feedback on defence and security matters through both official and personal interactions, and should provide a valuable addition to a number of our diplomatic missions abroad. This aspect of policy should also be seen in tandem with developments in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which is outlined below in Section 3.3.

Other Policy Requirements: The White Paper noted as a "unique feature" of Ireland's defence policy, the extent to which defence resources are utilised towards non-security ends. This is reflected in the various MOUs and Service Level Agreements (SLA) between the Department of Defence and other government departments. In general these functions are described as aid to the civil authority (ATCA) and include, amongst many other functions, engagement with the Irish Coast Guard on Search and Rescue, with Local Authorities on major emergencies, and with Irish Aid on training the Rapid Response Corps. This delivers significant benefits to the State by maximising utility from investment in defence and avoiding duplication of capabilities. However, the White Paper notes that these capabilities are primarily developed for security purposes.

Defence Policy Reviews: Finally, it should be noted that the White Paper introduced a new fixed cycle of defence reviews, to be carried out every three years. The first of these was the White Paper Update 2019 which is to be followed by a more comprehensive Strategic Defence Review in the next cycle. It is intended that this process will be associated with an enhanced process of capability development planning. The 2019 Update reaffirmed the commitment to these fixed cycle reviews and promised an accelerated process so that the planned Strategic Defence Review could commence in a timely fashion.

3.3 Common Security and Defence Policy

CSDP is an integral part of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. It provides the Union with an operational capacity for peacekeeping, crisis management and conflict prevention

missions to strengthen international security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter.

CSDP is given practical expression through military and civilian missions and operations. The EU has no assets of its own for these purposes. It relies on capabilities provided by the Member States, voluntarily and in accordance with their legislative framework and constitutional provisions.

A number of new instruments have been created in recent years in the area of CSDP including, the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Peace Facility (EPF) and the European Defence Fund (EDF).

Ireland has always strongly supported the development of the CSDP and of the EU capacity to respond to international crises in support of the UN, and has participated in all aspects of CSDP since it was established. Proportionately, Ireland is one of the leading contributors to CSDP missions.

Ireland's support for and engagement in CSDP reflects an acknowledgement of the importance of its contribution to international peace and security, as endorsed by the UN. The White Paper in turn acknowledges that no country acting alone can adequately respond to the complex and rapidly evolving security environment and that Ireland will "continue to play a full and active part in all facets of the CSDP in accordance with nationally determined values and principles".

Within the EU, security and defence is a national competence and any decisions, including any deepening of EU cooperation, or strengthening of the EU as a defence actor, require unanimity. For Ireland, any new proposals in this regard will have to be in accordance with the State's traditional policy of military neutrality.¹²

A discussion on the strategic direction of CSDP is currently taking place. Referred to as the 'Strategic Compass', it is intended to provide clarity about the EU's strategic goals when it comes to responding to external crises, building the capacity of partners, and protecting the Union and its citizens. It is currently expected to provide policy orientations and specific goals in the areas of crisis management, resilience, capability development, and working with partners.

According to the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President Josep Borrell, "the Strategic Compass offers the opportunity to define what we want to be able to do as a security and defence actor in 5-10 years from now. We need to be realistic and concrete, but at the same time, we should not be afraid to be ambitious. The reality is that we must prepare ourselves for a world where new threats are emerging, threats that we can only address together."¹³

¹² The White Paper on Defence 2015 states that Ireland will continue to maintain a policy of military neutrality which is characterised by non-membership of military alliances and non-participation in common or mutual defence arrangements.

¹³ [What's next for European defence? - European External Action Service \(europa.eu\)](#)

The Strategic Compass will set the future direction for the EU in security and defence and, as such, the context in which future decisions on CSDP missions or operations will be taken. That said, the Strategic Compass will not of itself create any specific obligations on Member States to develop military capabilities or to contribute to missions or operations, which remains each Member State's prerogative.

The High Representative, together with the Member States, has been invited to take work forward with a view to adoption of the Strategic Compass by March 2022. It would be speculative at this stage to suggest what may emerge from this process and what operational implications might flow from it.

3.4 The Roles of the Defence Forces

In the policy context outlined above, the 2015 White Paper sets out 10 roles of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) and two roles for the Reserve Defence Force (RDF), as follows:

- "To provide for the military defence of the State from armed aggression;
- To participate in multi-national peace support, crisis management, and humanitarian relief operations in accordance with Government direction and legislative provision;
- To aid the civil power – meaning in practice to assist, when requested, An Garda Síochána, who have primary responsibility for law and order, including the protection of the internal security of the State;
- To contribute to maritime security encompassing the delivery of a fishery protection service and the operation of the State's Fishery Monitoring Centre, and in co-operation with other agencies with responsibilities in the maritime domain, to contribute to a shared common maritime operational picture;
- To participate in the Joint Taskforce on Drugs interdiction;
- To contribute to national resilience through the provision of specified defence aid to the civil authority (ATCA) supports to lead agencies in response to major emergencies, including cyber security emergencies, and in the maintenance of essential services, as set out in MOUs and SLAs agreed by the Department of Defence;
- To provide a Ministerial air transport service (MATS);
- To provide ceremonial services on behalf of Government;
- To provide a range of other supports to government departments and agencies in line with MOUs and SLAs agreed by the Department of Defence e.g. search and rescue and air ambulance services;
- To contribute to Ireland's economic well-being through engagement with industry, research and development and job initiatives, in support of government policy;
- To fulfil any other tasks that Government may assign from time to time."

The RDF is tasked:

- To augment the PDF in crisis situations. This could include conventional military operations, ATCP and ATCA support, and barrack security or other duties that release members of the PDF.
- To contribute to state ceremonial events.

Chapter 4: Key Roles of the Defence Forces

4.1 Introduction

The Commission has not been asked to undertake a critical examination of the national defence policy outlined briefly in Chapter 3. It has, in essence, been asked to consider the appropriate capabilities, structures and staffing required for the Defence Forces to meet the requirements of national policy and to fulfil the tasks implicit in the high-level defence policy and the roles set out in Chapter 3. The Commission's consideration and recommendations on these issues is set out in detail in the following chapters.

The following sections of this chapter set out the Commission's reflections on some important contextual points in relation to the role of Defence Forces in fulfilling key aspects of current policy: military defence of the State, aid to the civil power (ATCP), maritime and air security, support for international peace and security, and aid to the civil authority (ATCA).

4.2 Military Defence of the State¹⁴

Defining a credible policy for the military defence of a smaller State can be challenging. This is the case for Ireland, which also maintains a policy of active military neutrality "which is characterised by non-membership of military alliances and non-participation in common or mutual defence arrangements". In the light of this stance, the White Paper states that "Ireland must adopt a posture of preparedness, and in the event of attack, Ireland must be prepared to act alone until the United Nations Security Council has taken appropriate measures."¹⁵

In principle, this implies a relatively high level of ambition for Ireland's military capabilities, particularly in the context of the complex and challenging current international security environment set out in Chapter 2. Arguably, this has in the past been ameliorated by the perception of a very low probability of conventional armed aggression or invasion by another country. Therefore, the implicit high level of ambition in the White Paper is not supported by the resources actually provided for defence.

This is further discussed in Chapter 10, but it can be noted here that Ireland's investment in defence is far lower than that of its peers among smaller Western European countries, including other neutral and non-aligned states. This has meant that our Defence Forces are largely staffed and equipped for constabulary and overseas taskings, rather than for defence of the State from armed aggression. As the White Paper 2015 notes, "a key challenge in framing defence policy is to balance expenditure on maintaining and developing a specific set of military capabilities against the risk of not being in a position to respond comprehensively if and when required to do so"¹⁶. In correspondence with the Commission, the Army's own current assessment is that it "is not equipped, postured or realistically prepared to conduct a meaningful defence of the State against a full spectrum force for any sustained period of

¹⁴ The Commission believes that the primary role of the Defence Forces to provide the military defence of the State would more accurately and meaningfully be presented as the "defence of the State, its people and resources" and this is therefore how this role is described throughout the rest of this report.

¹⁵ White Paper on Defence 2015, Chapter 3, p-24.

¹⁶ White Paper on Defence 2015, Chapter 3, p-24/5.

time". The Naval Service and Air Corps, with their current level of resources, are also clearly not enabled for such an eventuality.

This leads the Commission to the conclusion that there is a disconnect between stated policy and the actual current resources and capabilities of the Defence Forces. The Commission has therefore identified a need for clarification of our national level of ambition to guide its work. The White Paper 2015, and the White Paper Update 2019, provide a very thorough examination of the background issues, including the threat environment and, as noted in Chapter 3, set out a list of broadly stated roles for the Defence Forces. However, neither document provides a precise statement of level of ambition for those roles and, in particular, for the first role assigned to the Defence Forces i.e. to provide for the military defence of the State from armed aggression.

In these circumstances, the Commission has found it useful to focus its own work around three tiers of level of ambition for military defence of the State, its people and resources, and for the other core roles of the Defence Forces, and these are set out succinctly in Chapter 5. The capability requirements across the defence domains in terms of these three levels of ambition are considered in some detail in Chapter 6, and, critically, the associated funding implications are set out in Chapter 10.

4.3 Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP)

Protecting the security of the State is one of the main responsibilities of An Garda Síochána under the Garda Act 2015. The Defence Forces' contribution to domestic security includes a responsibility to provide ATCP, in effect to assist An Garda Síochána, when requested. As noted in Chapter 2, the current global and regional security environment is such as to require a joined-up approach across government to external and domestic security, as it is no longer possible to draw a clear line between the two in the light of contemporary complex and hybrid threats.

However, in recent years, the actual ATCP demands on the Defence Forces have been modest. ATCP operational outputs, as reported in the Department of Defence and Defence Forces annual reports in recent years, are much lower than in previous decades as the An Garda Síochána has considerably enhanced its own armed capability through its regional Armed Support Units and the Emergency Response Unit (ERU). This is a marked contrast with the situation circa 30 years ago when the security challenges on the island were such as to place onerous ATCP demands on the Defence Forces and An Garda Síochána had far less armed capability.

In the course of its work, the Commission has also identified that there is a need to regularly reassess ATCP¹⁷ tasks currently undertaken by the Defence Forces. In a dynamic security environment, and where policing capability is changing, there is a risk of such actions outliving their priority relevance. In the light of this, the Commission recommends that immediate consideration be given to standing down a number of current Defence Forces' taskings which no longer seem justified in the current security situation, specifically prison guard duties, explosive production facility security, Brigade Security Teams and Central Bank

¹⁷ References to ATCP tasks in this report should be understood to cover ATCP-type activities which arise from Government direction in addition to specific ATCP requests from An Garda Síochána .

security duties, after appropriate new arrangements are planned and put in place with the relevant authorities. These taskings accounted for a significant proportion of the Defence Forces' ATCP operational outputs for 2020: for example prison guard duties alone accounted for some 74,000 workdays per annum (see Appendix 3).

In contrast to these areas of reduced effort, the unique capabilities of the Defence Forces in areas such as Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN) response, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), and provision of Engineer Specialist Search Teams (ESST) are critically important for domestic security, as well as overseas operations and are recognised as such by An Garda Síochána. The Commission believes that these areas should receive increased emphasis and attention as to how they are structured and resourced, and recommends the reassessment of priorities, structures and the distribution of resources across the full spectrum of these activities.

The unpredictability that has been noted in Chapter 2 as a primary feature of the security environment means that no firm assumption can be made that the current low and declining level of ATCP demand on the Defence Forces will continue in the longer term, or that the position will not change at short notice. In terms of level of ambition, this places the Defence Forces in the position of needing to maintain a capacity to provide support to An Garda Síochána, if required, while in all likelihood continuing to undertake a very limited and declining level of ongoing ATCP tasks, apart from the areas of particular relevance identified above.

The creation of the Garda Special Tactics and Operations Command, alongside the development of a tiered national approach to armed response, including a highly capable national police intervention unit, raises questions about the potential role within the country of military Special Forces in ATCP operations. While relations between the Army Ranger Wing (ARW) and the ERU are very positive, the Commission believes that there is a need for their respective roles to be clarified to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how they would interact in an operational situation and recommends the development of common procedures and operational guidelines.

The Commission notes the long-standing and clear operational guidance provided to the armed forces and police services in other European countries such as Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The use of military Special Forces is normally reserved for complex and mass casualty attacks, CBRN events, Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (C-IEDD), and for the use of niche military capabilities such as Electronic Counter Measures (ECM). In most countries, routine training, exercising and exchanges are undertaken between specialised intervention units of the police and armed forces to ensure the development of a common understanding and to foster good relations. The Commission would advocate for the same in Ireland, including the development of secondment and placement opportunities in both organisations.

The majority of European countries have clear inter-agency policies and planning for the deployment of armed forces to support routine armed policing duties in times of emergency and the Commission recommends that similar contingency planning and training should be undertaken in Ireland.

Finally in this regard, the significant sea-going capabilities of the Naval Service, and the availability of a skilled diving service, with a mobile decompression chamber, is an important resource that is available for ATCP operations. The Commission notes the positive relations that exist between the two highly-trained diving units in both the Naval Service and An Garda Síochána, but nevertheless considers that there is a need for greater clarity around the roles of each to ensure smooth operational cooperation when incidents arise. In addition, a forum to provide further clarity for other agencies, including the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG) and the Commissioners of Irish Lights, would be beneficial.

4.4 Maritime and Air Security

Due to our location as an island off the west coast of Europe, Ireland has an exceptionally large and important maritime and air area of responsibility. This is reflected, *inter alia*, in the size of our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the scale of fishing activity in our waters, the number of aircraft crossing Irish controlled airspace, our growing sea-based energy infrastructure, and the number of sub-sea communications cables and sea lines passing close to our coastline. Some of these features have been cast into sharper relief by the impacts of Brexit. They also, in part, match the focus of the EU's Maritime Security Strategy and Action Plan in which Ireland, to date, has played a very limited role.

Our island location, therefore, has an important influence on aspects of our national security – both positive and negative. It also means that neighbouring countries in Europe have a keen interest in our capacity to police our air and maritime areas of responsibility, including in the politically sensitive area of fisheries, and to protect our national security from external incursion by sea or air. As discussed in Chapter 6, there are some striking capability gaps in this regard at present. In the light of this, the Commission recommends that Ireland should deepen its engagement with actions under the EU's Maritime Security Strategy. Furthermore, the Commission recommends that a National Maritime Security Strategy and a National Aviation Security Strategy should be developed.

The Naval Service has clear enforcement powers under the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 but more constrained powers under the Maritime Security Act 2004 and the Maritime Safety Act 2005. The Commission proposes that this inconsistency should be addressed, in the development of the proposed National Maritime Security Strategy or in advance of this, to ensure that the Naval Service has the powers required for effective enforcement in support of national security in the maritime domain.

In the key area of fisheries, the Naval Service is responsible for operating the State's Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) and fishery protection outputs of the Naval Service and the Air Corps are co-ordinated by the FMC. The Commission is concerned that while the Naval Service has a significant day-to-day tasking of providing a fishery protection service, it is apparent that the relationship between it and the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) needs to be strengthened. The Commission welcomes the fact that there is clear support within both the Naval Service and the SFPA for greater training of Naval Service personnel in relation to its fishery protection role and for improved access to specialist maritime law expertise. The Commission also believes that provision of training and greater levels of coordination between the Air Corps and the SFPA would enhance the outcomes that can be achieved from the maritime patrolling capabilities of the Air Corps and particularly so from 2023 when these

capabilities are set to be increased through provision of two new replacement maritime patrol aircraft. The Commission notes the Naval Service's need for maritime-specific legal advice to be readily available to operational commanders when deployed within the maritime domain to ensure effective and appropriate enforcement at sea and recommends that the future Naval legal branch include additional legal officers with appropriate maritime law and fisheries law specialisations.

The Naval Service is also legally empowered to engage in drug interdiction operations and, along with An Garda Síochána and the Revenue Commissioners, forms the Joint Task Force (JTF) on Drug Interdiction. The Air Corps provides air support to the JTF when required. The Naval Service provides support, shares intelligence and works closely with the Lisbon based Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N)¹⁸ and this proactive engagement has highlighted the substantial quantities of narcotics entering the EU, including Ireland. Other EU initiatives such as the Coordinated Maritime Presence in the Gulf of Guinea (addressing increasing security challenges such as armed piracy and kidnapping for ransom), EU NAVFOR Med 'Operation Irini' (focussed on enforcement of the UN arms embargo to Libya) and EU NAVFOR Somalia 'Operation Atalanta' (which is concerned with the effect of Somali-based piracy off the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean), all serve to highlight the EU's ambition to be a reliable partner and maritime security provider, and the Commission would support greater engagement by Ireland in these initiatives.

4.5 International Peace and Security

Ireland's most widely recognised policy stance on defence is perhaps around our "highly engaged and participative approach internationally, particularly through the UN and the EU"¹⁹. This has been given practical expression through the unique record of continuous service on UN peace support and crisis management missions since 1958 (see Appendix 4). These missions currently involve approximately 8% of the Army serving overseas at any time, and in recent years draw on in the region of 20% of the Army over the course of a year, which the Commission has noted is an exceptionally high level of commitment by international standards. This is by far the largest operational output by our land forces, year after year.

With the important exception of the deployment of one ship on rotation in the Mediterranean from May 2015 to October 2018, the draw on Air Corps and Naval Service resources for these missions has been comparatively limited. However, the Commission sees merit in the greater deployment of air and naval personnel to Air, Naval and Joint staff appointments in both UN and EU missions and Headquarters on a similar basis to their Army colleagues. This should deliver benefits in terms of sharing experience, interoperability with partner countries and personnel development.

In a submission to the Commission, the Department of Defence notes that "Ireland's defence policy recognises that no State acting alone can address the entirety of existing and emerging security challenges. It is therefore intended that Ireland's commitment to multilateralism will be realised through a range of policy instruments at national level and through multilateral

¹⁸ MAOC-N is an international co-ordination centre with access to national tasking agencies. Since being established by seven countries (including Ireland) in 2007, it has led to a greater focus on intelligence exchange amongst countries to tackle large drug shipments by sea.

¹⁹ White Paper on Defence Update 2019, Executive Summary, p-1.

collective security arrangements including with the UN, the EU, the OSCE and NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP), and bilaterally with other States". The Commission recognises that the engagement of the Defence Forces in such arrangements will become increasingly important as regional organisations continue to take on more responsibilities. These engagements enhance the Defence Forces' capacities, expertise and international networks. In that context, the Commission recommends that the opportunities offered by the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to develop Ireland's defence capabilities should be more fully explored and exploited than at present (see Appendix 5).

Greater engagement could provide opportunities to develop and strengthen the Defence Forces' capabilities and contribution to future peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief missions through provision of niche capabilities that may be sought by the UN and EU such as, for example, specialist CBRN response, Engineer Specialist Search and/or EOD teams, or deployment of a strengthened ARW/Special Operations Forces (SOF). Furthermore, the €8 billion from the EU budget that is dedicated to the European Defence Fund (EDF) for 2021-2027 may provide some scope for specialist Irish industry participation in the development of new capabilities e.g. potentially in areas such as cyber defence, force protection, CBRN and defence medical response (although the Commission notes that the EDF does not cover the acquisition phase of capabilities).

A strong multilateral commitment is also a cornerstone of Ireland's foreign policy and has taken on further importance in the context of our current membership of the UN Security Council. Ireland's participation in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy, including through the contribution of Defence Forces personnel to UN authorised missions and operations, is also a key component of our wider support for a rules based order. The commitment of successive Irish Governments to overseas deployment on multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations shows no sign of diminishing. The growing strategic engagement by Government on international peace and security, both during and after our tenure on the UN Security Council, will require ongoing support through progressive, forward-looking coordination between the Department of Defence, the Defence Forces and the Department of Foreign Affairs, structured, in particular, around priorities for crisis management, peacekeeping deployments and secondments to international organisations. The level of ambition indicated to the Commission by the Department of Defence envisages a continuation of the current scale of commitment to such missions (one Infantry Battalion, one Infantry Company Group and a number of smaller observer, training and staff officer deployments) in addition to the standby commitment of a contingent for an EU Battlegroup on a four to five year rotation.

It is clear to the Commission that the current level of commitment to peace support and crisis management places a very significant strain on the Army given its current reduced numbers and limited capabilities. In addition, the ever more demanding and dangerous environment in which these missions are undertaken, as confirmed to the Commission by key external partners, means that the capabilities that have served the Irish Defence Forces well in the past may not of themselves be adequate for the immediate and longer term future and this forms a key element of the Commission's consideration of capability requirements.

In this context, the Commission believes that the Government will be required to make

significant decisions in the near future about Ireland’s capacity and appetite to take on more high intensity peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations involving, for example, deployment of the ARW in a full SOF role, as well as in relation to the number and scale of our commitments to more conventional peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations in all domains. In order to ensure consistency between policy, levels of ambition and the defence budget, the Commission recommends that any such future decisions should reflect the resourcing, scale and capability of the Defence Forces.

4.6 Aid to the Civil Authority (ATCA)

The Commission understands that the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces have 49 Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Service Level Agreements (SLA) with a wide range of public authorities. These agreements, in effect, elaborate on the “other roles” elements of the high-level Defence goal²⁰ and are an important contribution to national resilience in dealing with emergencies and other demands on the State. The role of the Defence Forces in assisting the HSE with Covid-19 measures is a high profile current example. The role of the Air Corps in dealing with wildland fires and of the Army in assisting flood victims in recent years is also important, and will almost certainly become much more so in the coming years as we deal with the already predictable consequences of climate change. An important feature of these activities is that they are undertaken by the Defence Forces in close cooperation with other State and voluntary agencies and frequently through the frameworks for emergency management.

The White Paper Update 2019 and a review of the various MOUs and SLAs in place indicates that most ATCA activities are officially undertaken by the Defence Forces on an ‘as available’ basis, which is to say that other, more obviously military, tasks are seen as having priority. Nevertheless, the Commission understands that the practical position is that the urgency and importance often attaching to these tasks means that in many cases they must in fact be delivered and indeed prioritised by the Defence Forces. The Commission considers that the level of ambition on ATCA is therefore high in practice, and actual deployments in this area are likely to increase due to climate change impacts and other factors. As such, greater emphasis should be placed on providing ‘on call’ services to public authorities and the Defence Forces should have the requisite staffing, structures and capabilities to meet these ATCA demands.

The Air Corps has also been specifically tasked by the Government to maintain a critical and life-saving Emergency Aeromedical Support (EAS) service and undertakes inter-hospital organ transplant missions; the Commission is aware that these taskings absorb a large proportion of the Air Corps’ medium lift helicopter capability. Furthermore, both the Naval Service and the Air Corps play an important role, in cooperation with other agencies, in Search and Rescue (SAR) activities, while the Air Corps also provides a limited Ministerial Air Transport service.

²⁰ As set out in Chapter 3.1, Ireland’s high level Defence goal is to:

- Provide for the military defence of the State,
- Contribute to national and international peace and security, and
- Fulfil all other roles assigned by Government.

A previous external review²¹ outlined the rationale for the Naval Service and Air Corps acting as the primary sea going agency and primary aviation service provider for the State using a marginal costs approach that recognises the ongoing requirement for defence investment. While this policy has generally remained consistent in relation to the maritime activities of State, a broad range of aviation services are now outsourced by various government departments, including 'Maritime Aviation SAR', night time health service 'Priority 1 Transfers'²², prisoner transfers and, on occasion, aerial firefighting.

The development of defence capabilities is a long-term undertaking. Equipment platforms such as ships and aircraft have lifecycles lasting decades. The State is expected to invest significant funds in aircraft and ship replacement programmes this decade and in order for Irish society to benefit to the greatest extent from this investment, the Commission believes that a more holistic approach to State air and maritime services needs to be undertaken. The Commission recommends that a whole of government air and maritime services 'needs analyses' should be undertaken in the short term in an attempt to highlight trends and predict needs into the future over a 10-20 year period. The results of these analyses should be factored into the defence capability planning process allowing for the alignment of wider State needs with defence capability development where appropriate. These analyses should also be accompanied by a decision in the short term on how the State intends to deliver the Maritime Aviation SAR Service post 2033 as this decision will have significant impacts on future military aviation capability development.

In this context, the Commission believes that consideration should be given to the formal designation of the Air Corps as the principal aviation agency of the State in recognition of its unique roles and capabilities, and consistent with the long-standing policy recognition of the Naval Service as the State's principal sea going agency. This will be of particular importance in the coming decade as the military and civil usage of medium and large unmanned aerial systems increases and the State is likely to benefit from the procuring, developing and maintaining these systems through a central agency.

Furthermore, the Commission has observed that there are a number of areas in the maritime realm where relationships need to be clarified, such as between the IRCG and the Naval Service and Air Corps. In this regard, the Commission sees merit in Government consideration of the relocation of the IRCG to the Department of Defence. This would align the majority of State aviation services and voluntary response agencies²³ under one Minister and Department.

ATCA tasks also allow the Defence Forces to demonstrate its capabilities in delivering practical and helpful operational outputs to citizens in difficult circumstances. Some of these capabilities are unique, at least in their scale, among public agencies in this country and are dual-use, in that they have both military and ATCA applications, which underpins the case for investment in the relevant equipment and infrastructure.

The importance and value to the State and the people of this country of ATCA outputs by the

²¹ Price Waterhouse 1998 Review of the Naval Service and Air Corps.

²² Priority 1 transfer patients mostly comprise children who require emergency transfer to specialist centres in the UK.

²³ Civil Defence, the Reserve Defence Force and the IRCG.

Defence Forces is therefore greater than might be immediately obvious when considering the role of a military force. It is important to acknowledge this and understand that it underpins the overall level of ambition for the Defence Forces. For a country of this size, the Commission believes that it makes eminent sense to maintain a Defence Forces that can also deliver non-military outputs using dual-use capabilities and this should be appropriately valued, particularly when considering the requirements for the appropriate capabilities, structures and staffing of the Defence Forces, which is the task given to the Commission.

4.7 Recommendations

The issues raised in this chapter are largely contextual to the more detailed consideration in subsequent chapters of this report. However, the following general recommendations can be stated at this point.

The Commission recommends:

- **That specific taskings of the Defence Forces, including those arising from ATCP and ATCA, should be subject to regular review for continued relevance and priority, with appropriately defined levels of ambition.**
- **That an immediate focus be given to standing down a number of current Defence Forces' ATCP taskings which no longer seem justified in the current security situation.**
- **The reassessment of priorities, structures and the distribution of resources across the full spectrum of ATCP activities and, in particular, in areas such Chemical Biological Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN) response, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), and provision of Engineer Specialist Search Teams (ESST).**
- **That the respective roles of the Garda Emergency Response Unit (ERU) and the Defence Forces' ARW should be clarified to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how they would interact in an operational situation and common procedures and operational guidelines should be developed.**
- **That clear inter-agency policies and planning for the deployment of the Defence Forces to support routine armed policing duties in times of emergency should be developed and that the necessary contingency planning and training for such deployments should be undertaken.**
- **That Ireland should deepen its engagement with the implementation of the EU's Maritime Security Strategy.**
- **That a whole-of-government National Maritime Security Strategy and a National Aviation Security Strategy should be developed. As part of this, or in advance, the powers required by the Naval Service for effective enforcement, in support of national security, in the maritime domain should be addressed.**
- **That the future Naval legal branch should include additional legal officers with appropriate maritime law and fisheries law specialisations.**
- **That opportunities offered by the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation to develop Ireland's defence capabilities should be more fully explored and exploited than at present.**
- **That future Government decisions on Ireland's capacity and appetite to take on higher intensity peace support operations must be coherent with the resourcing and scale of the Defence Forces and ensure consistency between international security and defence policy objectives, level of ambition and defence budget.**
- **That a whole of government air and maritime services 'needs analyses' should be**

undertaken in the short term in an attempt to highlight trends and predict needs into the future over a 10-20 year period.

Chapter 5: Vision and Level of Ambition for Future Defence Forces

5.1 Introduction

The Commission believes that the Defence Forces of the future need a much clearer mandate and sense of its role in Irish society than is evident at present. This will require a coherent policy framework, a clear statement of level of ambition for all roles assigned by Government, and consistency between policy, level of ambition and funding. These three elements are an essential platform for the transformation of the capabilities, structures and staffing of the Defence Forces proposed in this report.

5.2 Vision and Values

In this context, the Commission's vision for the Defence Forces of 2030 and beyond is that:

The Defence Forces will be a joint military force capable of providing the people of Ireland with a safe and secure environment, and enforcing and protecting Ireland's sovereignty. It will uphold national values, reflect the diverse society that it serves, and remain poised to meet the challenges of an evolving and complex world.

The Defence Forces will:

- Have increased its capability to protect Ireland, its people and its resources;
- Be a partner of choice for robust multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations;
- Be seen as a relevant, valued contributor to the welfare and resilience of the State and its people, as part of an integrated whole of Government effort;
- Rank amongst the top choice of careers in the State.

The Defence Forces maintain a Dignity Charter, supported by a stated set of cultural values, which are *respect, loyalty, selflessness, physical courage, moral courage and integrity*. The Commission recognises the importance of these values and believes that the Defence Forces should prioritise recommitting to them, while fully recognising the current challenges facing the organisation and incorporating a strong commitment to diversity. This is further elaborated in Chapter 8. The Commission understands that in delivering the future force, there will be a need to rejuvenate an organisation that is currently lacking in confidence, with a clear sense of purpose and adequate capability which will be underpinned by a strong adherence to these values. The Commission believes that strong transformational leadership and the ability to motivate the force will be critical enablers for empowering the cultural change required.

5.3 Level of Ambition

As noted above, an essential, and currently missing, element in framing a credible mandate for the future Defence Forces and delivering the vision outlined above, is a clear statement of ambition for its core military roles. Given that the Commission has identified this urgent need for clarification of level of ambition, it has created a framework to guide its own work, focussed around three tiers of level of ambition (LOA) as set out below:

LOA 1 current capability: Aiming to uphold sovereign rights and serving on peace support operations to the same extent as at present.

This would involve striving to maintain current capabilities of the Defence Forces with appropriate replacement and routine modernisation of equipment and infrastructure. It would require maintaining the current supplement to the defence capital budget (see Chapter 10) while also continuing the commitment to a Defence Forces establishment of at least 13,569²⁴. Some reforms and restructuring of the Defence Forces could be implemented within the resource limitations but the core capabilities to defend the State, its people and its resources, to deploy overseas and to provide aid to the civil power (ATCP), maritime and air security, and aid to the civil authority (ATCA) supports will not keep pace with the increasingly challenging security assessment as set out in Chapter 2, the diversification and broadening of threats and the growing complexity of the modern operating environment.

In the Commission's view, this level of ambition would:

- Not be consistent with the more ambitious statements of defence policy contained in the White Paper 2015;
- Leave the Defence Forces unable to conduct a meaningful defence of the State against a sustained act of aggression from a conventional military force; and
- Be likely to require a reduced commitment to international peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations due to capacity constraints.

LOA 2 enhanced capabilities: Building on current capabilities to address specific, priority gaps in our ability to deal with an assault²⁵ on Irish sovereignty and to serve in higher intensity peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations overseas.

This level of ambition involves identifying specific additional capabilities needed to address key deficiencies in our capacity to undertake current and foreseeable new tasks, within the broad terms of current national defence policy. Many of these capabilities would also have application in Ireland's ongoing commitment to peace support and other engagement with international partners, particularly the higher intensity operations now becoming more common, and also to ATCP and ATCA tasks.

The specific effects that the Commission would envisage being delivered under this level of ambition and resultant capability requirements include:

- Providing improved troop protection, fire power and air and coastal defence for land forces, particularly in the light of more demanding roles overseas;
- Enhanced situational awareness with recognised maritime and air pictures through the acquisition and development of primary radar, coastal radar and associated systems;
- Significantly strengthening the military intelligence and cyber defence capabilities of the Defence Forces, including through the creation of a Joint Cyber Defence Command;
- An increased Naval presence through an upgraded fleet operating more effectively with double crewing and greater use of technology;
- Enhanced mobility and lift through an increased and enlarged fleet of fixed and rotary aircraft and access to appropriate multi-national arrangements; and

²⁴ The establishment for the Defence Forces is 13,569 made up of 9,500 PDF and 4,069 RDF.

²⁵ An assault is a single/limited attack designed to intimidate/pressure the Government to make certain decisions or consents.

- Enhanced contingent capability through the revitalisation of the Reserve Defence Force as part of a genuine single Defence Force across the three environmental domains of land, air and sea, and in the newer domains of cyber and space.

Fuller details are set out in Chapters 6 and 9.

LOA 2 would not involve a significantly changed policy direction or framework. Rather it is based on the Commission's identification of important lacunae in our current capacity to meet already stated national policy objectives and international responsibilities. It would involve some strengthening of Defence Forces staffing and structures, and a clear step up in investment, with a consequential impact on overall defence spending. The Commission estimates that the increase in annual funding required for this level of ambition would be in the region of 50% over the medium term - see Chapter 10 and Appendix 14.

This level of ambition would allow the Defence Forces to:

- Identify and detect infringements, incursions and attacks on our sovereignty, people and resources and would provide at least a limited capability to respond to these;
- Rapidly deploy forces at home and overseas with an increased ability to sustain and protect these forces;
- Remain a partner of choice for international peace support operations and allow the State to make more impactful overseas contributions; and
- Meet their regular ATCP and ATCA tasks, and provide a significant contribution to national resilience.

LOA3 conventional capability: Developing full spectrum defence capabilities to protect Ireland and its people to an extent comparable to similar sized countries in Europe.

LOA 3 would involve developing defence capabilities that would match those of other small Western European countries. Some of these countries are also self-declared as neutral while others participate fully in NATO.

This level of ambition would require Ireland to develop significantly strengthened capabilities in all domains, with commensurately higher levels of defence spending – of the order of two and a half to three times overall defence spending in recent years. These significantly stronger capabilities would also allow for a deeper engagement in international peace and humanitarian missions, and would deliver benefits in terms of ATCP and ATCA capacity.

As set out in Chapter 6, the capabilities for LOA 3 could involve, *inter alia*:

- Developing a substantial mechanised component of the Army offering state of the art force protection, communications, ISTAR²⁶ and firepower;
- A balanced fleet of at least 12 naval ships, supported by appropriate technology;
- Air combat and intercept capability through the acquisition of a squadron of combat aircraft;
- Combat aircraft, pilots and support personnel to provide organic intra-theatre mobility based on tactical transport helicopters to support overseas deployments;
- Maturing and strengthening a Joint Cyber Defence Command; and

²⁶ Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance.

- ARW/SOF having an organic self-sustainment capability which would include dedicated combat helicopter assets.

This would allow the Defence Forces to provide a level of deterrence, defence and protection comparable to other similar sized countries in Europe. Given the scale of change involved in our defence capability in moving to LOA 3, it could only be properly developed in the context of a full review of our national defence policy, which could be undertaken within the planned Strategic Defence Review process.

These three levels of ambition are not exhaustive but have proven useful to the Commission in its own deliberations, particularly in relation to the development of the Defence Forces capabilities (Chapter 6) and in considering the implications of different levels of defence budget (Chapter 10). The Commission believes they should also provide a useful framework for our political leaders to clarify their own thinking, especially on the critically important link between defence policy and defence budget.

It should be noted that there is no implication that the Commission finds all three levels of ambition to be equally credible. In particular, the Commission is clear that LOA 1 – essentially the continuation of “business as usual” – will leave this country unable to meet its desired level of military deployment overseas, weak on ATCP and ATCA capabilities and, most importantly, without a credible military capability to protect Ireland, its people and its resources for any sustained period.

5.4 Conclusion

The Commission has set out its recommendations on these matters in Chapter 10 following a detailed discussion on the key issue of funding.

Chapter 6: Capability Requirements for a 21st Century Defence Force

6.1 Introduction

The White Paper on Defence 2015 states that military capability can be defined as the ability to attain operational success for a given scenario, achieving desired effects under specified standards and conditions through a combination of ways and means. Military capability is developed through appropriate investment in new equipment, education and training, maintenance and development of infrastructure, ongoing review of military doctrine, the development of appropriate HR policies and the development of regulatory frameworks. In this chapter the Commission's focus is on capability development planning, levels of ambition and domain specific development of military capabilities under the five domains of land, sea, air, cyber and space, with a focus on equipment and, in the case of cyber in particular, personnel. In addition, this chapter provides recommendations on the capabilities aspects relating to 'green defence', the countering of hybrid aggression and emerging technologies.

6.2 Capability Development Planning

A formal capability development planning process and associated structures is universally recognised as an essential strategic tool to manage current capabilities and to identify and define future requirements in order to develop and maintain the most operationally effective and cost efficient mix of capabilities. Internationally, capability development planning processes are increasingly recognised as the key to address new challenges in the dynamic security environment as the nature of conflict evolves. These processes are a means to provide a picture of military capabilities over time, to look at long term trends and to identify a list of priority actions to direct work on capability development. Regularly updated capability development planning should work towards addressing new challenges in a dynamic security environment. Many partner states for EU and UN missions, and international organisations (such as the EU and NATO), have introduced sophisticated capability development planning processes tailored to meet specific capability requirements. Of particular note, the European Defence Agency (EDA) produces updated capability development plans to provide a full capability picture that supports decision making at EU and national level regarding defence capability development. Ireland's lack of a Capability Development Plan and a formal Defence capability development planning process is a significant gap hindering the effectiveness of the Defence Forces in meeting the roles assigned by Government.

In 2015, the White Paper set out that the Department of Defence would develop a detailed Capability Development Plan building on the work that was completed as part of the White Paper process. Moreover, the White Paper Update 2019, which reviewed progress with overall implementation, specifically identified this project as being a key initiative which needed to be prioritised. The Commission has been briefed on the work carried out by a civil-military project team to date and understands that the focus of the project has been on initiating the development of a capability development planning process as an interim step to developing a comprehensive plan. The Commission is very concerned to note that, despite a commitment made by Government in 2015, there is still no Capability Development Plan or formal Defence capability planning process in place.

The Commission has also been briefed in relation to the various structures that are in place for dealing with capability development within the current civil and military structures, through for example work on White Paper implementation projects, the Equipment Development Plan (EDP), the Infrastructure Development Plan, the Strategic Human Resources Group and the High Level Planning and Procurement Group (HLPPG). The Commission sees that these are all important enablers, in their own right, of capability development, but it is clear that there is a notable absence of overarching, and permanent, structures that are needed to guide the management of current and future capability development.

Of the processes in place, the Commission has noted that the HLPPG structure, in particular, has on various occasions been pointed to as a structure that works very effectively, from both the perspectives of the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence. A key output of the HLPPG has been the development of a civil- military plan that provides a comprehensive list of equipment projects to be advanced over a rolling five year period, encompassing the total process associated with achieving outcomes which supply the equipment component of military capability. This model of co-operative engagement, on a joint basis across the Services could usefully be replicated across various other inputs to capability.²⁷

As one example of a good practice approach, the EDA's most recent Capability Development Plan revisions (2018) identified 11 EU Capability Development Priorities. These are the result of an assessment conducted on the basis of contributions provided by Member States, the EU Military Committee and the EU Military Staff on short-term, mid-term and long term trends; capability shortfalls analyses and lessons learned from recent CSDP²⁸ operations; planned capabilities and the potential for future European cooperation in each of the capability domains; and a study into the long-term (2035 and beyond) capability-related and technological trends and needs.

There is an urgent requirement for the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces to prioritise the establishment of a codified top-down capability development planning process, potentially building on the processes already in place, which meets both national and international requirements, and serves to support proper engagement with capability development processes at EU and NATO/PfP level. To this end, the Commission recommends the immediate establishment of a permanent civil-military structure, staffed by subject matter experts from both sides, working to agreed civil-military processes, and ultimately working to an iterative Capability Development Plan. This Plan should include clear prioritisation of capabilities consistent with the level of ambition and associated funding decided by Government.

6.3 Level of Ambition

The Commission has used the three levels of ambition (LOA 1, LOA 2 and LOA 3), as outlined in Chapter 5, as an analytical framework to guide its work in identifying the necessary capabilities required under the five domains of land, sea, air, cyber and space. Capability requirements relating to military intelligence, counter hybrid, Army Ranger Wing (ARW)/

²⁷ In this context, capability is understood to include doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and interoperability (DOTMLPFI).

²⁸ CSDP refers to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.

Special Operations Forces (SOF), green defence and new technologies have also been considered.

It is apparent that key enabling capabilities that may have been sufficient in previous years are now approaching their end of life or are suffering from obsolescence. Moreover, due to an ever evolving operating environment, certain capabilities are now coming under pressure and will potentially limit the Defence Forces ability to respond nationally and internationally. As already noted in Chapter 4, the White Paper 2015 states that “Ireland must be prepared to act alone (in defence of the State) until the United Nations Security Council has taken appropriate measures”. This implies that the Defence Forces must have a level of capability that allows it to operate across all domains in defence of the State, and consequently also on multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations. The Defence Forces must therefore be capable of planning, delivering and sustaining operations, whilst taking all actions to minimise threats to the safety of military personnel. Therefore, the role of each capability in delivering the selected level of ambition is critically important.

Clarity around the Government’s policy position on level of ambition is essential to allow the identification of the level of capability that the Defence Forces require, and the associated timelines, thereby ensuring they remain capable of delivering on behalf of the State. By highlighting the need for levels of ambition, the Commission has identified the evident need for capability development to be pursued over the long-term, thereby ensuring that the Defence Forces remains capable of responding to the evolving strategic environment. Additionally, by planning for the long-term, the Commission believes there will be adequate time to allow for careful consideration of the development and sustainment of high-value investments for large-scale capital projects. Where possible, future capabilities should be dual-use, therefore allowing them to be used in delivering aid to the civil power (ATCP) and aid to the civil authority (ATCA) operations in addition to core military functions.

In developing capability, it is important to underline that defence of the State, its sovereignty, and the fulfilment of national obligations, must remain the priority. However, the current context, in which the threat level against Ireland is assessed as low, allows for the utilisation of a significant proportion of these capabilities overseas on peace support and crisis management operations. The Commission’s approach to capabilities has incorporated this consideration, and should the threat level to Ireland increase, then it would be foreseen that overseas contributions would be immediately reviewed and assets (capabilities) withdrawn to reinforce national defence requirements, as necessary.

In the following sections of this chapter, the specific capability requirements across the defence domains are outlined in terms of the three levels of ambition laid out in Chapter 5, and the associated funding indicated in Chapter 10. The Commission would emphasise the critical importance of the unbreakable link that must be established between Government decisions on defence policy, level of ambition, capability and approved budget lines.

The Commission has carefully considered the capability requirements for a step up to LOA 2 in particular, and to LOA 3 in more general terms, and its conclusions are set out below. However, before any final decisions are made on the specific capabilities recommended, appropriate examination by defence planners would be required to develop detailed

specifications, assess value for money and consider whether the same effect can be more effectively delivered by different means. The Commission also recognises that significant infrastructure development would be required to support some of the capability enhancements considered in the following sections of this chapter.

6.4 Capabilities in the Land Domain

LOA 1

The White Paper on Defence 2015 states that the Army will continue to retain conventional all-arms military capabilities. As such, under LOA 1, the Army will continue to provide the land component capabilities for the State's territorial defence, as part of a joint force approach, and will aim to continue to participate in peace support and crisis management operations overseas to the same extent as at present, while also continuing to provide ATCP and ATCA services.

LOA 1 involves maintaining all current capabilities of the Army with the appropriate replacement, and routine modernisation, of equipment and infrastructure as provided for in the current EDP and Infrastructure Development Plan. In some cases this will involve the straight-forward retention of capabilities taking account of the passage of time and natural obsolescence, and particularly so in relation to major platforms such as armour, artillery and communication suites, and also some enhanced levels of capability to keep pace with a fast changing international security context and technological advances. While the EDP provides for investment in the Land Forces Capability Development and Force Protection Programmes, it does not provide for the development of any additional capabilities needed to correct key capacity deficiencies which would be required to deliver LOA 2.

The Commission would stress however that, as outlined in Chapter 4, this leaves the Army unable to conduct a meaningful defence of the State against a sustained act of aggression from a conventional military force and it is in fact likely that serious consideration would need to be given to the long-term sustainability of its current very high level of commitment to international peace support and crisis management operations within the level of resourcing associated with LOA 1.

LOA 2

In the context of the land domain, the Commission considers that a step up to LOA 2 should seek to deliver significantly increased levels of:

- Mobility;
- Firepower; and
- Force protection.

To achieve this, LOA 2 would involve building on current capability levels with a view to addressing specific priority gaps in the Defence Forces ability to deal with an assault on Irish sovereignty and to serve in higher intensity multi-national peace support operations. The rolling EDP states that "the equipment items in the EDP will ensure the retention or creation of defence capabilities necessary for the Defence Forces to fulfil the roles set by Government at home and overseas". As such, the Commission understands that some equipment priorities

that would be encompassed by LOA 2 are, in fact, already provided for in the EDP and may at least partially meet key deficiencies.

The armour fleet is the primary land component capability for delivering force protection, mobility and firepower on operations at home and overseas. The current fleet of 80 MOWAG armoured personnel carriers (APCs) are primarily deployed to the UNIFIL and UNDOF missions and are only used on-island for training, including pre-deployment training. Within the limitations of the current fleet, this deployment pattern leaves no capacity for unit training or tactical exercises with armour for national defence. It also limits any additional rapid reaction capability to meet UN and EU requirements or commitments.

The Commission believes that sufficient APCs are required to meet overseas requirements while also supporting the required level of home training for deploying high readiness standby and standing forces overseas, and for unit training or tactical exercises with armour for national defence. There is a significant deficiency in this regard at present. The planned replacement of the existing fleet of APCs with a larger and enhanced fleet, by 2030 or shortly thereafter, would go some way towards remedying this deficiency. However, the Commission recommends that the replacement fleet must have a sufficient level of armour to provide adequate force protection for likely future higher intensity peace support and crisis management operations. They must also be equipped with sufficient firepower to enhance combat effectiveness.

The level of armour should, where required, be at NATO STANAG 4569 Level 4 across the range of replacement armoured vehicles and must include an appropriate mix of Combat, Combat Support and Combat Service Support platforms, all of which should be capable of operating in non-permissive environments in support of operations.

In terms of mobility requirements for on-island ATCP and ATCA operations, it has been apparent to the Commission on its visits to military installations around the country that there is only sufficient organic motorised transport available in each Infantry Battalion to transport approximately one company at a time. The Commission has also noted the reliance on Brigade HQ Transport Companies to move personnel which it understands has a significant impact on Unit training and operational capabilities. Noting that there is a truck replacement programme currently underway which will enhance existing capabilities, the Commission recommends the development of an organic transport capability, in each Infantry Battalion location, sufficient to meet on-island operational movement of personnel and equipment for training as well as ATCP and ATCA operations.

The acquisition of the additional helicopters recommended for the Air Corps later in this chapter, in the context of a step up to LOA 2, would enhance the Defence Forces' on island troop transport capabilities and provide joint force support to the Army, Naval Service and the ARW/SOF, as well as providing additional capacity for ATCA taskings.

In terms of ground based air defence, the Commission has noted that the Army's GBAD radar system and RBS70 missile system are approaching obsolescence. While acquisition of replacements are identified in the EDP, the Commission believes that the development of a new air defence system which is compatible with and integrated into the Recognised Air Picture

(RAP) — again, discussed later in this chapter — should be progressed as a priority in the event of a move to LOA 2.

LOA 3

Building on LOA 2, a move to achieving LOA 3 for the land force would, the Commission believes, mean that by 2040 the Infantry element of the Army would have a substantial mechanised component offering state of the art force protection, communications, ISTAR²⁹ and firepower. All Infantry units would have full organic lift capability, ideally mechanised. Combat Support elements would be modernised, with both Artillery regiments and Cavalry squadrons being fully interoperable to NATO standards, and the land force would have the appropriate level of combat service support elements. The Commission envisages that this level of ambition would provide a conventional defensive military capability that would fully contribute to the mitigation of national security risks, defend sovereign interests and participate in collective global security.

6.5 Capabilities in the Maritime Domain

LOA 1

The White Paper on Defence states that, as the State's principal sea-going agency, the Naval Service provides a unique sea-going capability and, while on patrol, Naval Service vessels carry with them unique characteristics as an expression of state sovereignty at sea. As such, while on patrol, vessels are multi-tasked in the sense that while delivering on the Service's primary day to day tasking of delivering a fishery protection service, they contribute to a shared common maritime operational picture, and provide support to other agencies in ATCP and ATCA, including crucial roles as part of the Joint Task Force on Drugs Interdiction and in the provision of Search and Rescue (SAR) capabilities and supports to the Irish Coast Guard.

In terms of LOA 1, the Commission envisages that this would mean the Naval Service would continue to provide the maritime component for the State's territorial defence as part of a joint force approach, within the significant limits of their current capabilities. The Naval Service would continue to contribute to the mitigation of national security risks and the defence of sovereign interests through the conduct of maritime security and policing operations in Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This would include continued delivery of a fishery protection service in accordance with the State's obligations as a member of the European Union, with a nine ship dual use fleet. In this regard, the Naval Service must be integrated internally (within the Defence Forces) and externally (with relevant State Agencies) as part of a whole of Government approach to ensure an agile response capability.

Under LOA 1, the Naval Service continues to participate in MARSUR³⁰ and in developing and implementing the EU Maritime Security Strategy and Action Plan within existing means and capabilities. Intelligence led operations will be conducted to deter, detect and detain as appropriate in order to protect Ireland's sovereign interests. Littoral and blue water SAR will

²⁹ Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance.

³⁰ MARSUR is a long-running Maritime Surveillance project undertaken by the European Defence Agency. It provides for dialogue between European maritime information systems and aims to improve the common 'Recognised Maritime Picture' by facilitating exchange of operational maritime information and services.

remain a key function and, within the limits of existing capacity, the Naval Service may further develop its expeditionary focus to ensure humanitarian and security oriented foreign deployments can be undertaken. The Naval Service will continue to embrace emerging environmental and climate challenges and “green” technology, but this level of ambition does not represent a maritime defence capability to respond comprehensively against conventional seaborne armed aggression.

Achieving this level of ambition will require maintaining the present fleet size with a mix of nine ships fully crewed. The Naval Service is in a position to meet existing Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Service Level Agreements (SLA) and to undertake a foreign deployment on an occasional basis. Routine maritime security and SAR taskings, as currently assigned, could continue to be met. However, this fleet size and current personnel establishment would allow limited 24/7/365 patrolling in the EEZ and virtually no capability to patrol Ireland’s extended maritime domain beyond the EEZ where it is occasionally necessary for Naval Service vessels to deploy. This level of ambition does not offer a conventional maritime defence capability. The crucial enablers for LOA 1 to be met are urgent action to address the shortfall in crewing numbers necessary for a nine ship fleet and a vessel replacement programme to create a modern nine ship fleet.

LOA 2

The Commission considers that a step up to LOA 2 should seek to deliver:

- Improved surveillance of Irish territorial waters, the Irish EEZ and the extended Continental Shelf;
- Increased presence of Naval vessels to respond to challenges to Irish sovereignty and sovereign interests;
- Establishment of an underwater survey and mine counter measure capability to secure access to vital Irish ports; and
- Enhancement of sub-surface capabilities to monitor sub-sea cables.

To achieve this would involve building on current capability levels in a manner that would mean that by 2030, or shortly thereafter, the Naval Service could conduct maritime security and policing operations in Ireland’s EEZ on a more extensive 24/7/365 basis utilising a balanced fleet of a minimum of nine modern ships including a multi role vessel (MRV). This modern fleet would deliver a minimum of 2,000 patrol days per year, approximately twice the current level, involving at least 220 days at sea per vessel. With this level of capability, and subject to Government policy considerations, there would also be a realistic prospect of more regular Naval Service participation in overseas peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations.

The fleet should have enhanced air, surface and sub-surface search capabilities, supported by appropriate modern technology including ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) and unmanned ship-borne RPAS (Remotely Piloted Aircraft System) providing tactical airborne capabilities. The fleet’s sub-surface capabilities should allow the Naval Service to monitor activity in the vicinity of sub-sea cables. The fleet should also be equipped with weapon systems capable of deterring aggressive acts against the State, or its infrastructure, in the maritime domain and have mine counter measure capabilities to detect and destroy sea mines. In terms of the latter, the Commission considers that keeping Ireland’s sea lines of

communication open, including access to our ports, is of vital national importance. It is the Commission's view that at least two vessels should possess maritime mine counter measure capabilities.

The maritime surveillance capability of the two new Air Corps maritime patrol aircraft scheduled for delivery in 2023 will greatly enhance the recognised maritime picture available to the Naval Service and will be a critical enabler for Naval Service operations.

Additionally, in the context of maritime surveillance, the Commission has noted the lack of a national coastal radar surveillance capability. The Commission believes that in collaboration with other maritime organisations, the Naval Service could play a valuable role in the development of such a capability and recommends a staged process be undertaken, with a pilot project in a small number of sites to assess the feasibility of an 'in-house' approach to the development of a coastal radar capability.

The Commission also believes that, in the context of a fleet size of nine modern ships, provision for double crewing would ensure maximum time at sea for all vessels. It is considered that a double crewing establishment per ship would optimise output from the fleet and would maximise the return on the substantial financial investment involved. The Commission acknowledges that switching to a double crewing approach will take time and, *inter alia*, would require a more rapid ship replacement programme, with each ship and its crews required to deliver an absolute minimum of 220 days at sea per year. To achieve this across nine ships by 2030 would be very ambitious, with a likely consequential requirement to upgrade current infrastructure for berthage and associated ship maintenance, but it is clear to the Commission that an accelerated ship replacement programme would be required initially for the three oldest vessels in the fleet, followed by the replacement during the next decade of the two P50 class vessels. These P50 class vessels, which are currently undergoing a mid-life refurbishment and extension programme, and the current P60 class vessels, which are the newest in the fleet, can deliver the minimum required days at sea to support double crewing. New vessels acquired as part of an accelerated vessel replacement programme must also be capable of supporting this minimum requirement. In line with the recommendation to substantially increase the patrol days of the Naval Service through double crewing, the current 90% metric for patrol days focused on fisheries duties would be inappropriate for the future. Smart metrics should be developed and agreed between the Naval Service and the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) focused on quality and effectiveness of enforcement activities rather than quantity. This should allow for an appropriate balance of overall sea going activities and also for more impactful fisheries enforcement.

Allied to this, the Commission believes that a more comprehensive patrol programme would also be facilitated by the establishment of a naval support base or bases, making use of existing port facilities at locations in the west and east, which would allow for faster deployment and would facilitate replenishment of fuel, fresh food and water, and the removal of waste. The location of a support base on the west or east coast, for example, combined with double crewing of vessels, would facilitate ships remaining at sea for longer periods as they would no longer have to return to Haulbowline for replenishment and crew changeover. Such a base would require only a minimum staffing level. The Commission believes that the operation of such a support base would also encourage higher numbers of applicants to join

the Naval Service from the local coastal areas where there are traditionally strong community and family affiliations with the fishing industry and the maritime sector generally.

The Commission believes LOA 2 would ensure all current obligations can be met, but also offers a considerably enhanced situational awareness and deterrence capability compared to LOA 1 throughout our maritime domain. The Commission envisages, however, that this LOA would deliver a limited defensive conventional maritime warfighting capability, but, in conjunction with other Defence Forces' capabilities, it would deliver a real maritime defence capability and a comprehensive maritime picture. This level of ambition would also enable Government to contribute more regularly to maritime peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations, as required, and substantially enhance national SAR capabilities.

LOA 3

The Commission envisages that, building on LOA 2, a move to achieving LOA 3 would provide the Naval Service with maritime capabilities for defending the State from a conventional military attack. Specifically, under this level of ambition, by 2040 the Naval Service would comprise a balanced fleet that would include 'Tier 3' type OPVs i.e. fully integrated and combat orientated platforms providing multi-asset integration in a defensive role. The fleet would be supported by appropriate technology as part of a joint Defence Forces structure.

The Commission envisages LOA 3 would deliver a defensive conventional maritime warfighting capability with a balanced fleet of at least 12 ships.

6.6 Capabilities in the Air Domain

LOA 1

The White Paper on Defence provides that the Air Corps will continue to operate a range of rotary and fixed wing aircraft with the principal aim of undertaking required military operations and to deliver a broad range of air supports to other government departments and agencies in line with various MOUs and SLAs.

Under LOA 1, the Air Corps would continue to be required to provide the air component for the State's territorial defence as part of a joint force approach, within the limits of its current capabilities. However it is clear that these limits are such as to effectively mean that the State has no air defence capability of any significance. The Air Corps would continue to provide an enhanced ISTAR capability through its recently acquired PC-12 fleet, with this capability due to be augmented by the ISR capacity of two new maritime patrol aircraft which are to be delivered in 2023 to replace the existing CASA aircraft. While not their primary role, the two CASA aircraft currently provide a limited air transport capacity and this will be enhanced to some degree with the delivery of their replacements. In terms of air combat, the Commission is aware that the existing PC-9 aircraft type, which primarily operate as the Air Corps' main pilot training aircraft, can provide a very limited air to air and air to ground capacity and this fleet is due for replacement in 2025. Moreover, while the Air Corps will continue to provide a Ministerial Air Transport Service (MATS), this is currently provided by a Learjet 45 aircraft, which is due for replacement in 2024.

In terms of rotary capabilities, under this level of ambition, the existing EC135 and AW139 helicopters would continue to deliver the Defence Forces' support and other capabilities but the Commission understands both these helicopter types will also require replacement before 2030. The AW139 helicopters will continue to provide a dedicated Emergency Aeromedical Support (EAS) service and an 'as available' emergency inter-hospital transfer service in support of the HSE. In addition, fixed wing aircraft could continue to be deployed for emergency patient and organ transfer missions in accordance with the relevant SLA, including transfers to and from the UK.

In terms of ATCP, the Air Corps would continue to provide dedicated resources to operating the Garda Air Support Unit fleet, while the current CASA fleet (to be replaced in 2023) will continue to provide maritime security through the delivery of maritime patrols in conjunction with the Naval Service and in accordance with the State's fishery protection obligations as a member of the EU. This will contribute to the maintenance of the shared common maritime operational picture. Furthermore, the Air Corps will, under this level of ambition, continue to provide air support if required to the Joint Task Force on Drugs Interdiction and, on occasion, may be requested to carry members of Revenue in an observational capacity for the purposes of monitoring vessels suspected of drug trafficking.

Under this level of ambition, the Air Corps would also continue to provide a range of ATCA supports to government departments and agencies, many of which are formalised by way of MOUs and SLAs, to a similar level as at present, including the provision of assistance to local authorities in dealing with wildland fires and the provision of SAR supports to the Irish Coast Guard. Crucially, the vast majority of ATCA supports provided by the Air Corps are committed on an 'as available' basis only but, as noted in Chapter 4, while this is intended to mean that military tasks must have priority, in reality the Commission has observed that the level of ambition on ATCA tends to be quite high in practice which is understandable due to the emergency nature of many such requests for support.

Ultimately, the Commission believes that LOA 1 would encompass continued provision of all current capabilities, commitments and supports provided by the Air Corps, with the appropriate replacement and routine modernisation of relevant equipment and infrastructure, as provided for in the current EDP and Infrastructure Development Plan. Investment in replacement aircraft, of various types, will clearly need to be prioritised in the period up to 2030 in order for the Air Corps to retain its current capabilities that are needed to operate at this level of ambition.

LOA 2

The Commission considers that a step up to LOA2 should seek to deliver:

- Surveillance of Irish controlled airspace;
- Support to the Naval Service in the surveillance of Irish territorial waters, the Irish EEZ and the extended Continental Shelf; and
- Support to the Army, Navy and ARW/SOF with tactical transport by fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

This would involve building on the Air Corps' current capabilities, as set out in LOA 1, in a way that would address a number of specific gaps in its ability to police Irish airspace and to

undertake current and foreseeable new air-related missions, including potentially in support of peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations overseas, within the broad terms of current national defence policy. However, the current EDP does not commit to the development or replacement of any aircraft platforms needed to address the key deficiencies which would be needed to deliver LOA 2.

Many of the submissions received by the Commission addressing air capabilities pointed to the absence of a Recognised Air Picture (RAP) and this is also a matter that has received considerable media attention in recent years, principally due to activity off our West coast within Irish controlled airspace (as distinct from sovereign airspace). Without the capability to produce a RAP, this effectively means that aircraft flying within our airspace can remain undetected if their transponders are not operative. As such, civil and military air traffic controllers may be unaware of aircraft operating in this manner which could present a risk to civil aviation traffic transiting Irish controlled airspace. It is also a clear weakness in our air defence capability in that this deficiency effectively allows military aircraft from potentially hostile states to test our air defence responses, and those of our neighbouring states. The Commission advises that this deficiency in Ireland's ability to produce a complete RAP needs to be addressed for various reasons, including the protection of our national sovereignty in the air, for the purposes of civil aviation safety and also maintenance of cooperative relations with neighbouring states who are also impacted by this gap. To produce a RAP requires primary radar capability, together with full civilian radar inputs. Acquisition of primary radar is identified in the EDP as being at the pre-planning stage, but with no definite commitment to pursue. The Commission believes that the development of a primary radar capability should be an immediate and top priority for the Air Corps under LOA 2.

Since the withdrawal from service of the Gulfstream IV aircraft, which was initially acquired and primarily used for the provision of MATS, the State has not had an organic strategic reach capability. As such, since 2014 the Air Corps has had a very limited capacity and reach to support Defence Forces' operations overseas and to provide assistance to the Department of Foreign Affairs in terms of repatriating Irish citizens in need abroad, or to provide support in humanitarian crisis situations. These deficiencies are over and above the Air Corps' inability to provide a more capable and flexible MATS which is now provided, in the main, by the aging Learjet 45 aircraft. The current short reach capability of the Learjet is compounded by its severe limitations in terms of passenger carrying capacity and the absence of any notable cargo carrying capacity. While the anticipated delivery in 2023 of two new maritime patrol aircraft will, in addition to enhancing the Air Corps' maritime surveillance capability and contributing to the Recognised Air Picture and Recognised Maritime Picture, also provide a greater degree of utility for transport and cargo carrying tasks, the Commission believes that in the context of LOA 2 it would be necessary to increase the Defence Forces' organic strategic reach capability through the procurement of a suitable aircraft with sufficient range to reach Defence Forces' missions abroad in Africa or the Middle East (e.g. Mali and Lebanon). The aircraft would also provide a cargo lift capability and a contingent MATS capability. In addition, it is understood that a replacement jet aircraft, primarily for MATS purposes, will be procured over the coming years and the Commission is aware that an inter-departmental group is currently looking at the issue of future provision of core MATS capability. This may also provide an added element of strategic reach capability.

In addition, consideration should be given to entering into a partnership arrangement with other countries for access to strategic airlift capabilities on an as required basis. This could provide access to the necessary capability in an efficient and cost effective manner. A number of such arrangements exist including, for example, the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) agreement.

In terms of rotary wing capabilities, the Commission has observed the increasing demand on Air Corps' helicopters in providing ATCA supports to government departments and agencies, particularly in the provision of air ambulance services to the HSE (through both the dedicated EAS service and the 'as available' inter-hospital transfer service) and the provision of assistance to local authorities in dealing with wildland fires. As outlined in Chapter 4, it makes eminent sense to maintain Defence Forces' capabilities that can also deliver non-military outputs using dual-use capabilities and, in this context, the Commission recommends that, within LOA 2, two additional medium lift rotary wing aircraft should be acquired, increasing the current medium lift fleet to eight helicopters. This will ensure the Air Corps' helicopter fleet can continue to deliver Defence Forces' supports and will also enhance its capacity to, for example, support local authorities when dealing with wildland fires and other such climate related emergencies that are evidently becoming more frequent. When the helicopter fleet is being replaced this should be on the basis of a step up to eight super-medium helicopters which will enhance Defence Forces' on-island troop transport capability, provide joint force support to the Army, Navy and SOF, and provide additional capacity in the ATCA role.

It has been recognised that there is a requirement for the provision of overarching oversight, regulation, integration and implementation of RPAS in the Defence Forces, and that there must be consideration of how such systems could be employed into the future. While RPAS are currently operated to varying extents in the land, air and sea domains, the Air Corps maintains the primary role in terms of oversight, regulation and training for all military aviation, which includes RPAS, in the Defence Forces. The Commission has noted that with the rapid development of drone technology and the proliferation of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) in private use, the capabilities of these platforms can pose an increasing threat to military aviation and to domestic security in terms of critical infrastructure. Such developments also pose a potential force protection issue for Defence Forces' missions overseas. In view of this growing threat, the Commission recommends that effective anti-drone or counter-UAS capabilities should be developed by the Air Corps as a matter of urgency.

The Commission also recommends that in order to further develop RPAS capabilities within LOA 2, the Defence Forces should participate in appropriate academic and commercial research and design activities, possibly in conjunction with the new Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) Unit in the Department of Defence, in order to leverage RPAS for core defence purposes. Consideration must also be given to the development of a strategy that examines, de-risks, and harmonises requirements of the Defence Forces, business (including commercial aviation) and recreational interests and their interfaces. In the longer term, a future RPAS capability development strategy should be considered as part of the civil-military capability development planning process that the Commission has recommended earlier in this chapter.

The White Paper Update 2019 recognises that the current gap in PDF strength below establishment is a capability deficiency, and it acknowledges that the shortfalls, which are especially marked in specialist areas where small numbers are more vulnerable to gaps, have impacted on the scope of Air operations and the availability of some aircraft. In addition to the need to close this personnel gap in the current strength of the Air Corps, the Commission in Chapter 9 of this report recommends the urgent re-establishment of both a first and second line Air Corps' Reserve with a particular focus on recruiting specialists such as trained pilots, technicians and air traffic controllers.

Under LOA 2, the Air Corps would be in a position to deliver enhanced air power effects across land, sea and air domains, including increased levels of support to the ARW/SOF, as well as to ship borne and overseas deployments. It would do this as part of a joint force structure through integrated capabilities including provision of a RAP, enhanced reach, and increased utility to support the Defence Forces and other government departments and agencies, particularly in emergency situations.

LOA 3

The Commission believes that achieving LOA 3 would require a very significant enhancement of the Air Corps' capabilities, with commensurately higher levels of defence spending.

A key element of a step up to LOA 3 would be the development of a national Air Defence Plan, with provision of a comprehensive air policing capability being central to this Plan. The provision of primary radar, as recommended in the context of LOA 2, is a key enabler of an air policing capability but, at present, the Air Corps has only an embryonic intercept capability, limited to slow flying aircraft and helicopters. Our lack of an intercept capability has been described by the Air Corps as a major gap in the State's overall defence capability. Under LOA 3, the Commission envisages that, building on the advent of primary radar, the Air Corps would develop an air combat and intercept capability through the acquisition of a squadron of jet combat aircraft, allied to the development of associated operational, infrastructure and support arrangements.

A move to LOA 3 would also involve a further step change increase from LOA 2 in organic reach and lift capability through the acquisition of two or three troop carrier type aircraft. The Commission also considers that LOA 3 would allow the overseas deployment of combat aircraft, pilots and support personnel to provide organic intra-theatre mobility based on tactical transport helicopters, with a minimum capacity being to move a platoon of personnel at will in an operational area. Deployed forces would also have an organic helicopter combat SAR capability. Such aircraft would be armed and equipped to operate in hostile environments in order to provide agile and effective fire in support of ground forces.

6.7 Capabilities in the Cyber Domain

The Commission believes that cyberspace is a dynamic and rapidly evolving area and will be a key military domain in the period to 2030 and beyond. The Commission has, however, observed that despite an identified need to build cyber capacity, the actual specification of key capabilities for military cyber defence, and related counter-hybrid warfare aspects, is in fact low to negligible in extant policy statements despite the regular specification of cyber risks and hybrid threats.

In outlining the capabilities required for the cyber domain, the Commission believes that the Defence Forces will be required to retain certain key capabilities across all three levels of ambition, with each defining the scale of the capability requirement in terms of personnel and infrastructure. In adopting this approach, the Commission understands the need for the Defence Forces to be capable of delivering military effect across the cyber domain in order to provide enabling capabilities to the future force and building on current capability levels with a view to addressing specific priority gaps in the Defence Forces' ability to deal with an assault on Irish sovereignty and to serve in higher intensity multi-national peace support operations.

The Commission wishes to emphasise that any enhanced capabilities that are called for in the cyber domain, and to deal with the cyber components of hybrid threats, must be developed within the framework of national security policy, the National Cyber Security Strategy³¹ and in extremely close co-ordination with the National Cyber Security Centre, An Garda Síochána and other relevant agencies, including the National Security Analysis Centre, given the strong interdependences and overlapping nature of some taskings and challenges in this domain.

Like all military forces worldwide, the Defence Forces are increasingly reliant on cyberspace and this reliance creates specific risks given their role in defence of the State and in broad ranging support for national resilience where their unique capabilities are deployed. While digitalisation brings significant improvements to the management of military operations, these systems can, increasingly, become prime targets for adversaries in conflict, pre-conflict and peacetime situations. Similarly, command and control and situational awareness technologies are highly dependent on IT networks. The Commission, therefore, believes that there is a need to ensure that increasingly digitalised defence capabilities and force networks are cyber secure and highly resilient especially in view of the increasing exposure of Defence Forces' elements across all military networks, services' platforms and overseas operations. This will require considerable effort and increased provision of dedicated resources.

The Commission has noted the policy commitment made in the 2015 White Paper that it is necessary for the Defence Forces to be trained and equipped to NATO standards and, as such, the Commission believes that this should now act as the benchmark for cyber capability development within the Defence Forces. To achieve this policy objective, the Commission is strongly supportive of continuing the Defence Forces' involvement in relevant national and international forums which will enhance this and other aspects of capability development. It is recommended that these engagements be deepened, including the following:

- Exchanging information on equipment solutions, and pooling and sharing for cyber defence capabilities with the EDA, especially in EU-led missions;
- Involvement in relevant EU Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects;
- Strategic relationship development, collaboration and coordination with national and international agencies and partners which will be fundamental to the Defence Forces' cyber operations capability development and delivery;
- Leveraging, sharing information and cooperating with the private sector.

³¹ https://www.ncsc.gov.ie/pdfs/National_Cyber_Security_Strategy.pdf

Based on the proposed structure outlined in Chapter 7, the Commission advises that capability development within the cyber domain should be scalable to meet the level of ambition chosen by Government. The Commission believes that the key driver of the scale of capability to be delivered, for each level of ambition, will be the numbers and competences of dedicated and trained specialist personnel assigned to work for the Defence Forces in this area. Building on the structures as outlined in Chapter 7, the Commission would, broadly, distinguish the three tiers of level of ambition on the following basis:

LOA 1

At LOA 1, while existing Communication and Information Services (CIS) Corps' structures continue to fulfil current needs, this level of ambition nevertheless requires a fully staffed CIS establishment of some 350 personnel. The Commission notes that the CIS Corps currently has a deficiency of c. 35% at officer level and a deficiency of c. 25% at technician level which leaves the Corps' far short of the numbers required to meet LOA 1.

LOA 2

At LOA 2, the creation of a new Joint Cyber Defence Command that will manage Cyber Defence, Defence IT Services and CIS Services would require a further 100 specialist personnel.

LOA 3

At LOA 3, the Joint Cyber Defence Command would be matured and would require a staff of a further 200 specialist personnel in addition to the 100 specialist personnel required for LOA 2.

The Commission would emphasise that in identifying a requirement for significant numbers of additional personnel, per LOA 2 and LOA 3, the Defence Forces would need to radically alter the way it sources personnel to work in this domain. Traditional approaches to recruiting military service personnel first, and then training selected serving personnel as specialists, must be set aside, or supplemented, as should customary fitness standards and conventional requirements for military training. The Commission would envisage that large numbers of personnel directly recruited to work in this area would be civilian Information and Communications Technology (ICT) employees and contractors, as well as members of Reserve, and CIS personnel from across all services.

While this continues to be a rapidly developing area, the Commission understands that in some comparator military organisations cyber staffing levels can comprise around 5% of all military personnel and minimum numbers can be in the range of approximately 100 to 400 personnel for Cyber Commands (including relevant intelligence functions and including both military and civilian personnel). This higher level of staffing, say 300 to 400 personnel, provides an international good practice benchmark but would, however, be in the realm of LOA 3, and would likely require an implementation timeline of a minimum of 10 years. In the context of a move to LOA 2, with 100 personnel, the Commission has assessed that an implementation timeline of a minimum of five to 10 years would likely be required.

The Commission believes that the Defence Forces' future cyber capability, across all levels of ambition, should adhere to an established command and control network that provides full transparency on all cyber related operations. In terms of leadership, the Commission emphasises the importance of authorisation for cyber defence operations, at the strategic, operational and tactical levels, due to the need to ensure there is a full understanding at all levels about how the Defence Forces should respond to national level incidents.

LOA 1 does not represent a cyber defence capability to defend comprehensively against armed aggression conducted through cyber or non-cyber means. Within the context of whole of government cybersecurity planning, the Commission believes that consideration should be given to the Defence Forces developing effective capability to prevent, monitor, detect, defend against, and recover from cyber attacks on Defence Forces' IT networks and systems, as well as full spectrum military cyber response capabilities for defensive purposes. The Commission notes however that the unique nature of so-called offensive and strategic reconnaissance cyber capabilities for defensive purposes could require prepositioning and intrusive activities during peacetime for the eventuality of future conflict. Such a measure would require a careful examination of the legal implications. The Commission believes that a move to LOA 2 or LOA 3 would provide the Defence Forces with cyber capabilities for defending the State from a military attack and deterring aggressive acts against the State in the cyber domain or other military domains such as land, sea and air.

The Commission recommends that across all levels of ambition cyber-related capability development planning needs to be dynamic, iterative and subject to modification to take into account emerging threats and future policy shifts, while also drawing on good international practice and lessons identified on process, suitable to an Irish context. The Commission is concerned to find that current cyber Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) capability is low. In developing future cyber capability, the Commission recommends:

- An increase in the share of research and technology (R&T) related expenditure within the defence budget to deliver on cutting-edge defence capabilities to support national and European technological development and resilience, spanning areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), cyber defence, unmanned systems and robotics.
- Examination of the value of in-house development of cyber defence tools by highly skilled personnel allied to the acquisition of Military Off the Shelf (MOTS) and Commercial Off the Shelf (COTS) instruments.
- At a minimum, leveraging and working closely on cyber RTI with the recently established civil-military Defence RTI Unit, and looking to the Defence Enterprise Initiative to identify collaborative opportunities that will develop the Defence Forces' capabilities while contributing to Irish research, innovation and enterprise development. Moreover, a dedicated ICT/cyber RTI capacity to look at areas such as evolving security architectures and technologies, including AI, ML, 5G, electronic warfare, cryptography, quantum computing, amongst others, would be beneficial.

Furthermore, the Commission is concerned that there is a need to fill gaps in the Defence Forces' CIS capability to support Ireland's overseas policy objectives including participation in multi-national peace support operations, crisis management tasks and humanitarian relief operations. Within a scalable approach to level of ambition, these would include provision of:

- Fully integrated CIS supporting the Joint Common Operational Picture;
- Deployable cyber capability in support of overseas operations;
- Domain specific cyber capabilities in the land, air and maritime domains, aligning with capability requirements in the relevant NATO PARP Goals³² to ensure resilience and security of static and deployed CIS networks;
- Ensuring that enabling capabilities, such as cyber and ISTAR, are sufficient for overseas operations under UN or NATO/PfP command as well as several EU led activities in unexpected or higher-end environments, such as, formal NATO Federated Mission Network participation and enhanced use of NATO applications.

The Commission considers that there will be a need to support national security analysis and overseas operations through effective cyber-related military intelligence capabilities. In delivering this capability, the Commission recognises the need for transparent legal frameworks and associated powers that are up to date and reflective of the evolving nature and complexity of cyber activities. The Commission envisages that the scalable capabilities required to meet these requirements include:

- Cyber defence capabilities;
- ICT Command Support;
- Software analysis;
- Deployable cyber mission teams;
- Electronic warfare, multi-sensor intelligence, human intelligence, electromagnetic imagery, ISTAR, surveillance and geo-spatial analysis;
- Enhanced Signals capabilities for real life support and force protection, deployable worldwide specialist ICT infrastructure and support, additional technical support and maintenance to support and maintain technical solutions for open source intelligence, geospatial intelligence (land and maritime) and image intelligence within the Defence Forces Military Intelligence HQ and all service intelligence units;
- Enhanced cyber-related Military Intelligence to provide distinct support for (1) military operations and (2) national situational awareness and support to other national intelligence actors if required;
- Cyber defence components of hybrid activity and counter hybrid warfare;
- Information operations;
- Strategic communications.

To develop the human capability element, the Commission recommends that a skills gap analysis and prioritisation of external cyber courses to address current gaps are conducted, while Defence Forces' cyber specialists should participate in military and civilian cyber exercises to develop cyber capabilities. Defence Forces involvement in EU/NATO training and exercises should include land, air and maritime cyber specialists, as life-long learning is essential whereby personnel need to develop and maintain expertise in a wide array of technologies and systems. The Defence Forces should participate in whole of government training in order to enhance organisational readiness for national resilience operations, and to develop interoperability across all government networks and in particular with the National Cyber Security Centre and An Garda Síochána. The Commission believes that it would be

³² NATO PARP goals G6109 CIS and G7300 Cyber Defence.

beneficial to continue creating a culture of cybersecurity awareness across the Defence Forces through the continuation of cyber security awareness-raising through good practice, training and organisation wide cyber hygiene.

In terms of training, the Commission believes that it would be advantageous to ensure training mechanisms are put in place at the operational level, but also at a senior decision-maker level. As such, cyber security concepts should be included in Command and Staff leadership syllabi and at operational level.

The associated infrastructure requirements arising as a consequence of a move to LOA 2 or LOA 3 must also be provided for, including the examination of approaches to cyber forensics research at national and EU level as well as sharing facilities and services offered within them, including sharing information on cyber defence-related facilities available to contribute to common security and defence policy operations. Consideration should also be given to the development of a national cyber test range and facility to address cyber defence.

6.8 Capabilities in the Space Domain

In 2019, NATO recognised space as a new operational domain alongside air, land, sea and cyberspace. While the extant Irish defence policy framework does not include space as an ambition in any traditional sense, the Commission notes that the White Paper Update 2019, in considering developments in hybrid warfare, stated that both state and non-state actors may use conventional and high-end asymmetric methods concurrently across the land, sea, air, cyber and space domains.

The Commission notes that there is no national strategy addressing the security dimension of space, and that Government policy to date has been focussed on the role of space in the enterprise sector, with the publication of a National Space Strategy for Enterprise 2019-2025³³ in 2019.

Nevertheless, space has enabled Defence Forces' operations for decades in the realms of communications, navigation, imaging and intelligence, particularly through the use of satellite technology. The Commission was briefed by the Defence Forces on existing space domain enablers developed under the EDP. For example, the Air Corps' new PC-12 ISTAR aircraft and the Naval Service fleet are configured to integrate technologies and deliver capabilities through satellite connectivity. Furthermore, the new maritime patrol aircraft that are due for delivery in 2023 will also utilise satellite connectivity, while the future Software Defined Radio programme which is being progressed under the EDP will explore satellite based connectivity to ensure the safety and security of communications networks in national and international areas of operation. The Commission expects that the Defence Forces will continue to develop these enablers where appropriate.

Ireland is a partner to the EDA capability development project on joint procurement arrangements for the EU SatCom market, and the Commission would encourage future participation in similar partnering arrangements at EDA and EU level.

³³ <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/National-Space-Strategy-for-Enterprise-2019-2025.html>

To maximise capabilities in the space domain, the Commission believes that a technology and information enabled Defence Forces would have the potential to deliver force multiplier effects, which in turn would enhance the Defence Forces' ability to respond to threats. This will be critical to future tech-enabled defence and security, and the Commission recommends that the Defence Forces should continue to grow their participation in collaborative partnerships and research activities to leverage space domain services and capabilities for core defence and security purposes. Innovation will be the key to 'over the horizon' development in anticipation of future capability requirements.

Noting that a number of fundamental principles guide the conduct of space activities, including the idea of space as the province of all humankind, the freedom of exploration and use of outer space by all states without discrimination, and the principle of non-appropriation of outer space, the Commission envisages that, under LOA 1, the Defence Forces will continue to pursue opportunities to develop space domain enablers that support its national and international obligations.

In terms of LOA 2, the Commission believes this would reflect a more ambitious aim for the Defence Forces through the growth of its participation in space research activities for core defence and security purposes.

6.9 Intelligence Capabilities

In terms of intelligence capabilities internationally, most armed forces have strengthened and enhanced their counter intelligence, information, electronic warfare, signals and geospatial intelligence capabilities. In the context of the clarification of the role of Military Intelligence proposed in Chapter 7, the Commission recommends similar enhancement of the capabilities of Military Intelligence in this country. This is particularly required in the context of developments in hybrid, espionage and cyber activities within a dynamic security environment, as outlined in Chapter 2. The Commission also notes the critical role of intelligence in peace support operations overseas and the potential importance too of the enhanced ISTAR capabilities of both the Air Corps' new PC-12 fleet and the new maritime patrol aircraft due for delivery in 2023.

The Commission expects that the role of intelligence in underpinning the security of the State will grow in the near term. It is therefore important that any necessary changes are made to the national intelligence architecture and legislation as soon as possible. In the context of the urgently required clarification of the mandate of Military Intelligence recommended in Chapter 7, the Commission proposes the creation of a new specialised Joint Military Intelligence Service to support the level of professionalism required to fulfil its clarified mandate. Furthermore, the Commission has observed that in comparator countries reserve and civilian personnel constitute a significant and valued proportion of the military intelligence workforce and would urge the same approach in Ireland.

As part of a restructuring of the Defence Forces Training Centre, the proposed National Defence Academy, which will provide all Joint services training to the Defence Forces, should include a Military Intelligence School with the ability to conduct specific land, air, naval and cyber intelligence training. This school should also oversee defence linguistic training. The Commission envisages that the School could deliver shared programmes of mutual interest

to An Garda Síochána which would also contribute to enhanced cohesion and mutual understanding.

6.10 Counter Hybrid Capabilities

The White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019 recognised the threat posed by the increased use of hybrid aggression. This comes in the form of a range of methods used in a coordinated manner by both state and non-state actors to target vulnerabilities in states below the threshold of formally declared warfare, and can include nefarious cyber activity, misinformation, election interference and various forms of political, economic and other pressures. The current National Cyber Security Strategy refers to the cyber component of nefarious hybrid activities. The Commission would hope that the next iteration of the National Cyber Security Strategy would be guided clear national security objectives, and with reference to response mechanisms to ‘hybrid threats’.

As emphasised in Chapter 2 of this report, countering these complex threats requires a comprehensive, whole of government approach within which the Defence Forces could be expected to play a significant role alongside other agencies in a pooling of relevant capabilities. Defined counter hybrid capability is currently lacking in the military context and shortfalls exist in information operations. While at present national policy in this emerging area could best be described as nascent as there is no overarching national counter-hybrid strategy, Ireland is far from unique in this regard.

Nevertheless, the Commission expects that a confluence of factors will come about in the period to 2030 and beyond that would change the foundations of policy approaches for counter-hybrid responses, including (1) changes to and a maturing of Irish national security strategy and organisational structures (e.g. civilian intelligence) and (2) the maturing of global good practices surrounding counter-hybrid response mechanisms. In light of this, it is likely that additional changes would be made to the current/emergent national policy framework; the necessary skillsets and priorities of leadership operating in this domain; and national organisational structures in order to better align with developments and emerging best practice.

Within this developing policy space, the Defence Forces should continue to develop relevant military capabilities, including in military intelligence and cyber defence, to deal with hybrid aggression and activity on military systems and to contribute to broader national resilience. The ultimate objective should be to ensure that 24/7 military situational awareness is in place to ensure that cyber-attacks and other hybrid aggression would be identified and intercepted in order to defend Ireland’s sovereignty, its sovereign rights, its national interests and resources. The structural proposals in Chapter 7 of this report should contribute to clarifying military responsibilities in this regard.

6.11 ARW / SOF Capabilities

The Commission has noted that the White Paper 2015 contained a commitment to the enhancement of the capabilities of the ARW, in particular the aim of increasing the strength of the unit considerably. The Commission understands the work of a civil-military White Paper project team established to progress this commitment was completed in 2020 and an agreed report was subsequently approved by senior management. The Commission welcomes the

recommendations made relating to the requirement for an increase in the ARW/SOF establishment and enhancement of capabilities which will afford the Defence Forces the capability to rapidly deploy SOF nationally and internationally when required in response to civil or military crises, thus enhancing the overall Defence Forces contingent capability.

As outlined in Chapter 7, the Commission believes that the ARW should have the capability to provide on-island response for “tier one” SOF related roles in support of An Garda Síochána and to continue to provide specialist expertise for covert intelligence and counter espionage activities. The Commission envisages that these capabilities, and the increased establishment and other enhancements arising out of the White Paper project, would be provided under LOA 1.

In Chapter 4 of this report, in the context of defining levels of ambition for the Defence Forces, the Commission indicated that Government will be required to make significant decisions in the near future about Ireland’s capacity and appetite to take on more high intensity peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations, which may involve deployment of the ARW in a full Special Operations role. The Commission believes that the ARW should have a range of capabilities across each domain which can enable tier one SOF operations, which includes war fighting capability, in order to provide credible military response options with necessary engineering, ordnance and logistic support to sustain SOF capabilities. In the context of a step up to LOA 2, the Commission recommends that this should include permanent Air and Maritime Task Groups in Casement Aerodrome and Haulbowline Naval Base, including associated logistics. There is also a clear requirement for the development of enhanced infrastructure, including urgently needed accommodation, to support the already planned expansion of the ARW. In addition, also under LOA 2, the Commission considers that a specialised SOF Reserve to provide surge capacity for IT, cyber and medical surgical roles should be provided to ensure that the ARW/SOF are fully resourced, equipped and trained to meet all taskings assigned to it. Furthermore, the enhancement of Air Corps’ rotary wing capabilities under LOA 2, as recommended earlier in this chapter, will be a key enabler for SOF operations in terms of helicopter transport capability that would be deployable into, or close to, a mission area.

In the context of a step up to LOA 3, the Commission would envisage the ARW/SOF having an organic self-sustainment capability which would include dedicated combat helicopter assets. This would provide an independent capability to insert, operate and extract from mission areas.

6.12 Green Defence

The evolving nature of environmental degradation and climate change continues to have an adverse impact on the global commons, and green defence is a concept that will affect the way the future Defence Forces will operate and deploy.

The impact of this environmental degradation and climate change is placing a higher demand on military organisations as Crisis Management Operations and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations are becoming more ubiquitous. The Commission notes the experience of other militaries in disaster relief operations, whereby having to deal with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events in their home country has taken a toll on

their core capabilities and limits their capacity to provide disaster relief overseas. As the climate insecurity of small island states and developing countries increases, it is also likely that more efforts will be needed to build the capacity of their militaries for disaster relief, nationally and internationally.

Climate change is increasingly described as a threat multiplier that impacts collective security and has an impact on military operations, resilience and capabilities. The Commission notes that it is likely that the Defence Forces will be required to increase their awareness of the impact of climate change on security, along with developing clear adaptation and mitigation measures and enhanced outreach, while ensuring a credible deterrence and defence posture and upholding the priorities of the safety of military personnel and operational and cost effectiveness.

The Commission notes too that the White Paper on Defence 2015 highlights the need for the Defence Forces to have a sustainable energy policy, as energy security and energy efficiency are becoming increasingly important elements in the evolving defence and security environment. Ireland, as a supporter of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, has embraced the overarching ethos of the goals in its national policy initiatives, and this will have a strategic impact on the Defence Forces as Irish society continues to embrace green technologies. Future oriented energy strategies must focus on enhancing operations by reducing vulnerability, and by steadily decreasing dependence on fossil fuels.

However, as military forces evolve to implement green technologies, such progression cannot result in military capabilities being degraded. In light of this, the Commission suggests that a more detailed analysis of green defence solutions is examined and assessed during the initial stages of capability development. A challenge that will face all military organisations is that the nature of military operations means that the three services train, fight and reside in their respective environments of land, air and sea. The Defence Forces, therefore, will be required to review and modernise how they assess and manage the physical impact their operations have on the environment.

More specifically, the current approach of retrofitting antiquated Defence Forces' buildings places a high stress on a limited budget and the long-term sustainability of continuing this approach should be comprehensively assessed. For example, developing modern military infrastructure on existing military lands may provide a more sustainable solution that generates a long-term viable model for the Defence Forces. Such an approach may also be applied to the management of retrofitting extant capabilities as more sustainable and alternative fuels become available. Additionally, future capability development will have to include 'whole of life processes' which provide a sustainability assessment that commences at the initiation of a project and concludes at the destruction of the capability. This approach will ensure that the full life-cycle carbon footprint of the capability is factored into the acquisition process.

Having said this, the Commission welcomes the Defence Forces' commitment to adopting a green defence approach. The Defence Forces has reduced its energy consumption by 20% since its baseline year of 2009, and the subsequent creation of the Defence Forces Senior Energy Executive in 2011 assigns responsibility for monitoring energy usage across all

services. Moreover, the adherence to best international practice with respect to Energy Management Standards is commendable and highlights the on-going efforts to implement sustainable practices across the organisation. Similar to other armed forces, the Defence Forces commitment to decarbonisation and embracing the ambitious targets set out in the Climate Action Bill 2021 and the EU Green Deal will significantly enhance the Green Defence agenda.

The Commission believes that the recently established Defence RTI Unit should continue to pursue research initiatives aimed at laying the foundation for green defence concepts for future Defence Forces capabilities. For example, the Defence Forces should consider examining alternative ammunition types and investigate the use of green ammunition and green pyrotechnics, particularly for use in training operations and on training lands. Other militaries have pursued these technologies and have realised significant savings from the post-management of contaminants associated with traditional ammunition and pyrotechnic technologies. Coordinating efforts with partner nations would be beneficial to avoid unnecessary duplication, and the Commission notes that the Defence Forces currently participate in the European Defence Agency's Energy and Environment Working Group, and the Consultation Forum for Sustainable Energy in the Defence and Security Sectors.

As energy efficient and environmentally responsive technologies can often be of a civilian or dual-use nature, there may be an opportunity to pursue engagement with external green defence industries. However, the Commission is conscious of the true purpose of military capability, and acknowledges that the aims of military effectiveness and energy sustainability are complementary and not mutually exclusive.

6.13 Technology for the Future Force

Technology in the military continues to evolve and develop at an exponential rate, yet military organisations do not necessarily evolve as rapidly to support new systems. The Commission believes that the Capability Development Planning process must allow the Defence Forces to develop and maintain credible advances in technology, enabling it to succeed as a small armed force across a broad spectrum of operations. The future Defence Force must orient itself to prioritise research and development in order to be capable of identifying and embracing emerging and advanced technologies that are applicable to all operating domains. The Commission notes that the White Paper on Defence 2015 highlights the fact that technological advances will continue to present opportunities and threats and that the Defence Forces must be positioned to manage such change in order to identify and develop appropriate responses.

The Commission is aware that military technology is increasingly characterised by disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence, anti-access and aerial denial capabilities, augmented reality, biotechnology, cyber, directed energy, hypersonic velocity, nanotechnology, robotics and swarms, among others. The future Defence Force should be capable of strengthening its ability to responsibly exploit existing and new technologies, from both the civilian and military sectors. Future capabilities that would encompass unmanned and semi-autonomous systems will have implications for future force structures and organisational capability. The Commission envisages that the implications of such technological systems will require the divesting of legacy capabilities that cannot be

economically adapted to meet the demands of the future, while also taking calculated risks in some areas. During visits to various military installations, the Commission observed that many of the technologies being used for current operations were obsolescent and require modernisation.

The Commission welcomes the recent establishment of the Defence RTI Unit and believes that if the Unit is sufficiently staffed, structured and resourced it will enable the organisation to engage with academia and industry to examine how to exploit technology developments to support defence capabilities. This work could be usefully informed by lessons learned on operations, training and experimentation, and should include other inputs such as standardisation processes used by the EU and NATO, as provided for in the White Paper on Defence 2015. In parallel, the Defence Forces should continue to mitigate risk in those niche technology areas that have not been invested in and avail of alternative arrangements such as PESCO and the European Defence Fund by leveraging on the experience and influence of European partners.

Consequently, the future force must develop a joint capability development mind-set to accommodate the possibilities that technology can enable, thus acting as a force multiplier for the Defence Forces in 2030 and beyond.

Defence Forces' submission to the Commission

The Commission considers that horizon scanning will be required in order to ensure that a systematic process is used to identify emerging technologies and that solutions selected will yield the greatest benefit for the Defence Forces. In light of this, the Commission recognises the need for the Defence Forces to establish specific strategic capability development plans as the technology selected should be fit for purpose and deliver on the identified requirements. To exploit the increasing pace of technological change, the Commission acknowledges that there will be a need to develop an agile procurement process that ensures the Defence Forces can rapidly acquire the required technological solutions to address new threats. However, the Commission cautions that simply procuring superior capabilities will not be enough, and the speed at which the Defence Forces can adapt and integrate technologies will be more relevant. The development of technology in a joint future force out to 2030 and beyond will require an evidence-based process that encapsulates national defence policy, is resource aware, and promotes a common purpose in capability development across all services.

6.14 Recommendations

It must be noted that, in making these recommendations, the Commission acknowledges that future defence planners may, in their detailed analysis, assess that the same effect can be delivered by different methods and, as such, the specific equipment recommendations outlined are intended to be indicative rather than prescriptive once the recommended capability requirement is met.

The Commission recommends:

- **The immediate establishment of a codified top-down Capability Development Planning process through the creation of a permanent civil-military structure in order to embed capability development within the Department and the Defence Forces.**
- **That analysis of green defence solutions and horizon scanning to identify emerging technologies, is embedded in the capability development planning process.**

- **Within the context of a decision being taken by Government that the capability requirements of the Defence Forces need to step up from LOA 1 to LOA 2, whether as a discrete step or as an interim position en route to LOA 3, the following is recommended:**
 - Replacement of the existing APCs with a larger and enhanced fleet equipped with sufficient firepower for future overseas missions, and with 'level 4' armour across armour platforms where required;
 - An accelerated programme of Naval vessel replacement to ensure a balanced fleet of nine modern ships by early in the next decade;
 - That all modern vessels be double crewed to ensure each vessel spends an absolute minimum of 220 days at sea per year, with this being phased in over the course of the vessel replacement programme;
 - That smart metrics for patrol days should be developed and agreed between the Naval Service and the SFPA focused on quality and effectiveness of enforcement activities rather than quantity;
 - Development of a primary radar capability to ensure a complete Recognised Air Picture can be maintained;
 - Development of anti-drone or counter UAS capabilities and the further development of RPAS capabilities;
 - Enhancement of the Air Corps' fleet with the addition of a fixed wing aircraft with strategic reach capability, and two additional medium lift rotary wing aircraft for enhanced Defence Forces support and priority ATCA taskings;
 - The ultimate replacement of the existing medium lift helicopter fleet with a fleet of eight super-medium helicopters;
 - Deepening Defence Forces involvement in relevant national and international forums to enhance capability development in the cyber domain;
 - A further 100 additional specialist personnel as part a Joint Cyber Defence Command managing Cyber Defence, Defence IT Services, and CIS Services;
 - Establishment of SOF Air and Maritime Task Groups, including associated logistics, to be based at Casement Aerodrome and Haulbowline as part of the planned increase in the ARW/SOF establishment and enhancement of SOF capabilities;
 - Strengthening Military Intelligence capabilities and the establishment of a Joint Military Intelligence Service in the context of a revised mandate underpinned by new legislation (as proposed in Chapter 7);
 - The establishment of an Intelligence School, with shared programmes, which would facilitate enhanced cooperation and joint training opportunities between Military Intelligence and their Garda counterparts; and
 - The development of relevant military capabilities to counter hybrid activity where military capability is required and to contribute to national resilience.
- **Within the context of a decision being taken by Government that the capability requirements of the Defence Forces need to step up to LOA 3, the following is recommended:**
 - By 2040 the Infantry element of the Army would have a substantial mechanised component offering state of the art force protection, communications, ISTAR and firepower. All Infantry units would have full organic lift capability, ideally mechanised. Combat Support elements would be modernised, with both Artillery

- regiments and Cavalry squadrons being fully interoperable to NATO standards, and the land force would have the appropriate level of combat service support elements;
- By 2040 the Naval Service would comprise a balanced fleet of at least 12 ships, supported by appropriate technology, as part of a joint Defence Forces structure;
 - As part of a national Air Defence Plan, the Air Corps would develop an air combat and intercept capability through the acquisition of a squadron of jet combat aircraft, allied to the development of associated operational, infrastructure and support arrangements;
 - The overseas deployment of combat aircraft, pilots and support personnel to provide organic intra-theatre mobility based on tactical transport helicopters. Deployed forces would also have an organic helicopter combat SAR capability armed and equipped to operate in hostile environments;
 - A further 200 additional specialist personnel working under a matured Joint Cyber Defence Command; and
 - ARW/SOF would have an organic self-sustainment capability, which would include dedicated combat helicopter assets to insert, operate and extract from mission areas.

Chapter 7: Shaping the future - Defence Forces' Structures

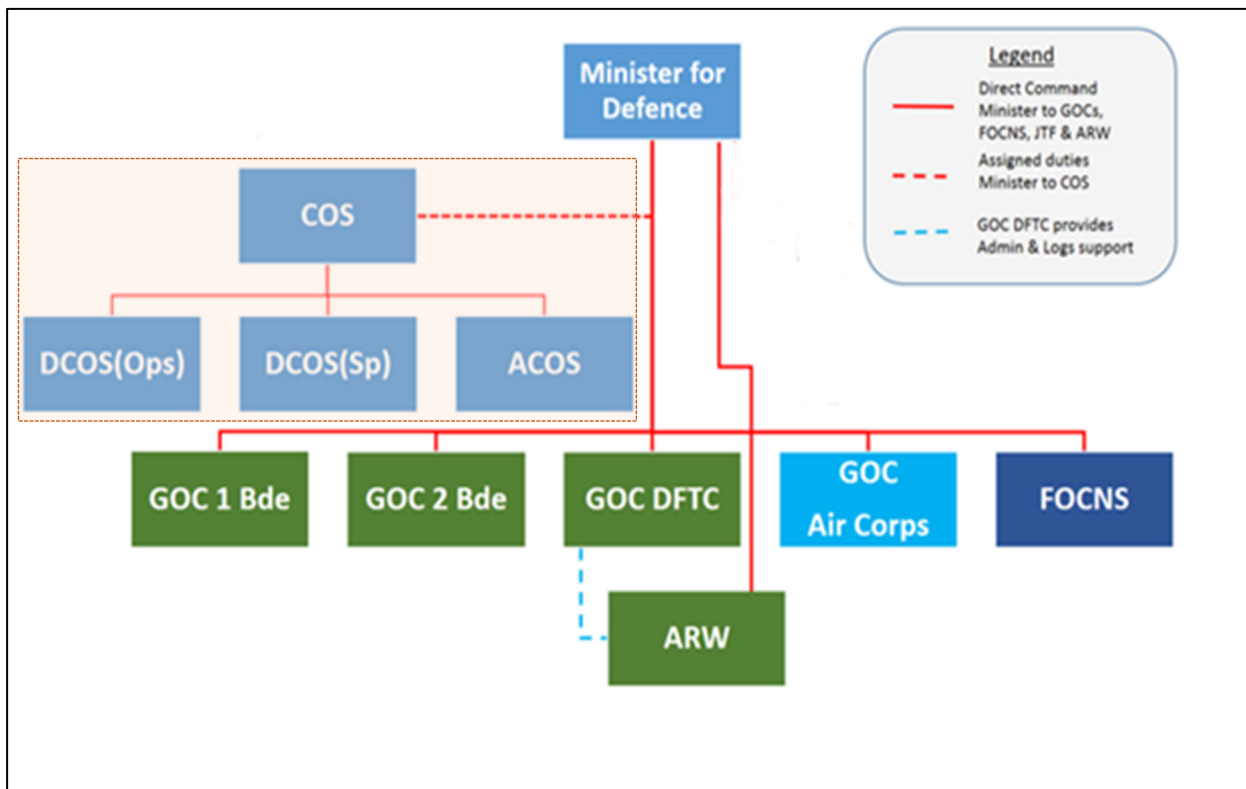
7.1 Introduction

In considering the appropriate structures for the Defence Forces, the Commission examined other military forces including a review of their force structures, disposition, establishments, Command and Control structures, and approaches to jointness. The military forces examined included Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, as these forces have undertaken structural reforms of varying degrees in recent years, have developed future force concepts, and were deemed to have particular relevance for the comparative analysis.

7.2 Defence Forces – High-level Command Structures

The current high-level structures of the Defence Forces provide that the Chief of Staff heads Defence Forces Headquarters³⁴ (DFHQ), and is supported by two Deputy Chiefs of Staff (Operations and Support) and the Assistant Chief of Staff who, collectively, represent the General Staff. Figure 7.1 below indicates that the General Staff (shaded box) are located within the Department of Defence and the Chief of Staff, as the Minister's principal military adviser, is tasked with supporting the Minister in the discharge of his Command and management functions in regard to the military.

Figure 7.1 – Current Command and Control Structure



³⁴ Defence Forces Headquarters is the military element of the Department of Defence.

Under the current system, a legal instrument is issued by the Minister³⁵ assigning duties to the Chief of Staff in relation to the military effectiveness, efficiency, organisation and economy of the Defence Forces for which he is accountable to the Minister. Beneath the Minister for Defence there are five formation commanders, namely, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 1 Brigade (Army), GOC 2 Brigade (Army), GOC Defence Forces Training Centre (Army), GOC Air Corps (GOC AC) and the Flag Officer Commanding Naval Service (FOC NS). The General Staff does not include the three Army GOCs, the GOC AC or the FOC NS and sits as part of DFHQ within the Department of Defence.

Military command in the Defence Forces³⁶ flows from the Minister to the particular formation commander. The Commission notes with concern that the current formal chain of command excludes the Chief of Staff as command responsibilities are not part of his/her assigned duties from the Minister. The Interim Report of the White Paper Project on High Level Command and Control (C2) in the Defence Forces noted that, while the Chief of Staff is the highest ranking officer and therefore has *de facto* moral authority, *de jure* command is dispersed amongst a number of lower ranking officers. This unusual, and potentially confusing, structure diverges from what is considered best practice internationally and underlines the need to modernise the current system.

Command³⁷ and Control³⁸ are two distinct functions and while there is no authoritative definition, most countries merge the definitions of Command and Control which results in a statement that typically includes command, authority, direction and assigned forces. The current system does not allow the Chief of Staff to assign command through the provision of Operational Command (OPCOM³⁹), Operational Control (OPCON⁴⁰), Tactical Command (TACOM⁴¹) and Tactical Control (TACON⁴²), as is commonly done by other militaries.

On completing its analysis of comparable countries, the Commission noted some key characteristics:

³⁵ In accordance with Section 13 of the Defence Act 1954.

³⁶ Section 17 of the Defence Act 1954.

³⁷ Command is defined as the authority vested in an individual of the armed forces for the direction, coordination and control of military forces. NATO Definition – NATO Standardization Office (2018), *AAP-06 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*.

³⁸ Control is defined as the authority exercised by a commander over part of the activities of subordinate organisations, or other organisation not normally under his/her command that encompasses the responsibility for implementing orders or directives. NATO Definition – NATO Standardization Office (2018), *AAP-06 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*.

³⁹ OPCOM - The authority granted to a commander to specify missions or tasks to subordinate commanders, to deploy and reassign force elements, and to retain or delegate OPCON, TACOM, and/or TACON, as may be deemed necessary. It does not of itself include responsibility for administration or logistics.

⁴⁰ OPCON - The authority delegated to a commander to direct assigned force elements so that the commander may accomplish specific missions or tasks which are usually limited by function, time, or location; deploy force elements concerned; and retain or delegate tactical control of those elements. It does not include authority to allocate separate employment of components of the force elements concerned. Neither does it, of itself, include administrative or logistic control.

⁴¹ TACOM - The authority delegated to a commander to specify tasks to force elements under his/her command for the accomplishment of the mission specified by higher authority.

⁴² TACON - The detailed and usually local direction and control of movements or manoeuvres necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned.

- The most common high-level Command and Control structure used by the militaries analysed had a Chief of Defence (CHOD⁴³) supported by a Vice CHOD and three Service Chiefs.
- The CHOD is normally supported by a Strategic Headquarters which can include key functions such as finance, logistics, strategic HR, strategic planning and governance, and defence services, and an Operational Headquarters for managing national and international military operations.
- While there is no universal archetype for joint structures, each country examined adopted a bespoke Command and Control model congruent with their respective defence and security environments.
- The structures examined reflected each country's geostrategic location and the structures were appropriately balanced.
- Each military had a common core structure of three Service Chiefs, ensuring service parity, and a senior officer responsible for managing joint operations.
- Jointness was viewed as a key enabler by all of the military organisations, leading in some cases to integration across land, sea, air, cyber and space, with defence intelligence viewed as a key enabler.
- Joint operational training is routine.
- All international comparators claim to have experienced enhanced organisational efficiency and effectiveness through the inculcation of jointness and structural reform.

Within the current Irish structure, the Army does not have a designated 'head', and the Air Corps and Naval Service are seen as formations, and not as separate services, which is not in line with best international practice.

As stated in the White Paper on Defence 2015, NATO standards have become the accepted standard-setting benchmarks for modern military forces and, as such, it is necessary for the Defence Forces to be trained and equipped to NATO standards. The White Paper also states that the Defence Forces must be able to operate jointly, in that the organisation should be able to bring elements of the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service together to deliver operational effects in a coordinated and cohesive manner. The Commission notes that in submissions received from the Defence Forces, there is a clear recognition of the need for jointness.

Many issues raised during the Commission's visits to various military installations, and in briefings from senior management from both the Defence Forces and Department of Defence, highlighted current deficiencies with respect to jointness. Culturally, there appears to be a pronounced tendency to maintain the status quo, which is seen by many to whom the Commission spoke as involving a siloed mind-set, which has been reinforced by the rigidity of the current establishment regulation entitled C.S.4⁴⁴. Jointness, therefore, as a concept is not practiced or inculcated within the organisational culture of the Defence Forces, or in how the

⁴³ A Chief of Defence (CHOD) has the authority to command and control the armed forces, and is typically the principal military adviser to the Minister. The CHOD is normally responsible for the general conduct of the Defence Forces and the efficient, effective and economical management of its activities and resources.

⁴⁴ Defence Forces Regulation C.S.4. – This provides the numerical establishment for staffs, units and other elements in the Organisation of the Defence Forces (includes the Permanent Defence Force and Reserve Defence Force).

Defence Forces prepares for operational taskings. This has resulted in organisational inefficiencies, particularly in the management of joint functions and operational planning.

In light of this, the Commission recommends that the high level Command and Control structures of the Defence Forces be aligned to international best practice, and that the supporting joint functions are staffed by all three services, from all ranks.

The Commission believes that, for jointness to be truly realised, a more unified and proactive approach is required at all levels of the organisation, including the creation of a modern and flexible C.S.4. The Commission recognises the importance of training, and there is an evident need to develop a training institution that has the authority and resources to lead a joint, multi-domain training and education programme for the Defence Forces. The creation of a National Defence Academy would permit the delivery of joint operational and planning courses to middle and senior ranking officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs).

7.3 Future Force Structures

In the light of best international practice, the Commission has developed a high-level command and control structure that should offer a suitable solution for the future Defence Forces, as shown in Figure 7.2. The proposed model seeks to provide a high-level structure that has unity of command and unity of purpose, and broadly conforms to modern structures used in other countries. This will require transformational change in Irish Defence Force structures. A detailed description of the proposed new structure is provided in Appendix 6 and is summarised below. The Commission acknowledges that this proposed structure is not definitive and the force design process may identify additional roles.

7.3.1 Chief of Defence (CHOD)

Firstly, the Commission recommends the creation of a CHOD with the authority and appropriate military command and control of the Defence Forces at the strategic level, including the ability to assign OPCOM, OPCON, TACOM and TACON. The CHOD should be fully accountable to the Minister for Defence and should continue to have direct access to the Minister at all times.

Governance and Oversight

The Commission understands that these proposals, and in particular the creation of a CHOD, will impact significantly on current governance structures, and recognises therefore, that the future governance and oversight framework of the Minister and the Department of Defence will need to be redesigned to provide effective assurance and accountability. This area is beyond the Terms of Reference of the Commission and is not therefore further developed in this report.

In the proposed structure, the CHOD should be supported by three Service Chiefs and a Joint Force Commander, who should also be the Vice CHOD. The proposed structural change should provide parity between the services, facilitate genuine jointness and have the additional benefit of bringing the Army under one Commander, a significant failing of the

current system. This high-level senior leadership team which, at the discretion of the CHOD, may be formalised as a Command Board or similar title, should support the CHOD in managing issues connected to the development of the Joint Force, thereby providing a contemporary management team to support the CHOD in the execution of his/her duties.

A core feature of the proposed model will be the emphasis on developing a joint mind-set throughout the future force. The Commission emphasises that achieving a joint future force will take time, and require consistent commitment and determined leadership from the CHOD and Service Chiefs. The creation of key joint enablers and joint training has proven successful with other military forces, and should provide senior leadership with the support required to undertake the necessary organisational change.

7.3.2 High Level Command and Control

In determining the future high-level Command and Control structure, the Commission has reflected on the core principles utilised by other military forces and outlined a potential structure, as displayed below in Figure 7.2. The design and implementation of a modern structure should prioritise unity of effort so that the Defence Forces knows what it is to collectively achieve. Unity of command is necessary as one person must have the responsibility and authority to direct the Defence Forces towards its strategic objectives.

As outlined in Figure 7.2, under the CHOD the Service Chiefs should be responsible for commanding their own services, and the Joint Force Commander/Vice CHOD should be accountable for the following three areas:

1. **Operations** – Planning and execution of operations.
2. **Joint Enablers** – Special Operations Command, Military Intelligence Service, Joint Cyber Defence Command, Office of Defence Services and Facilities Management, Joint Health Command and Joint Logistics Command.
3. **Joint Training and Education Command** – National Defence Academy, Officer Training Centre, National Induction/Recruitment Centres, Apprentice School, and Doctrine and Concepts Centre.

An Assistant Chief of Defence (A/CHOD) and an externally recruited Head of Transformation would assist the CHOD to manage Defence Forces Headquarters. This Headquarters would include the key supporting enablers for the strategic planning of the Defence Forces, including HR, finance, communications, legal, and the Joint Capability Development function.

The Commission recognises that in the future there may be a requirement to separate the positions of Joint Force Commander and Vice-CHOD. This would involve the creation of a new additional post at this level (OF-7). This would be likely to arise with a larger scale and higher level of ambition for the Defence Forces, and certainly in the case of a step up to LOA 3 as described in Chapter 5. It could also be required if the new structure led to a significant increase in the scale and number of joint operations.

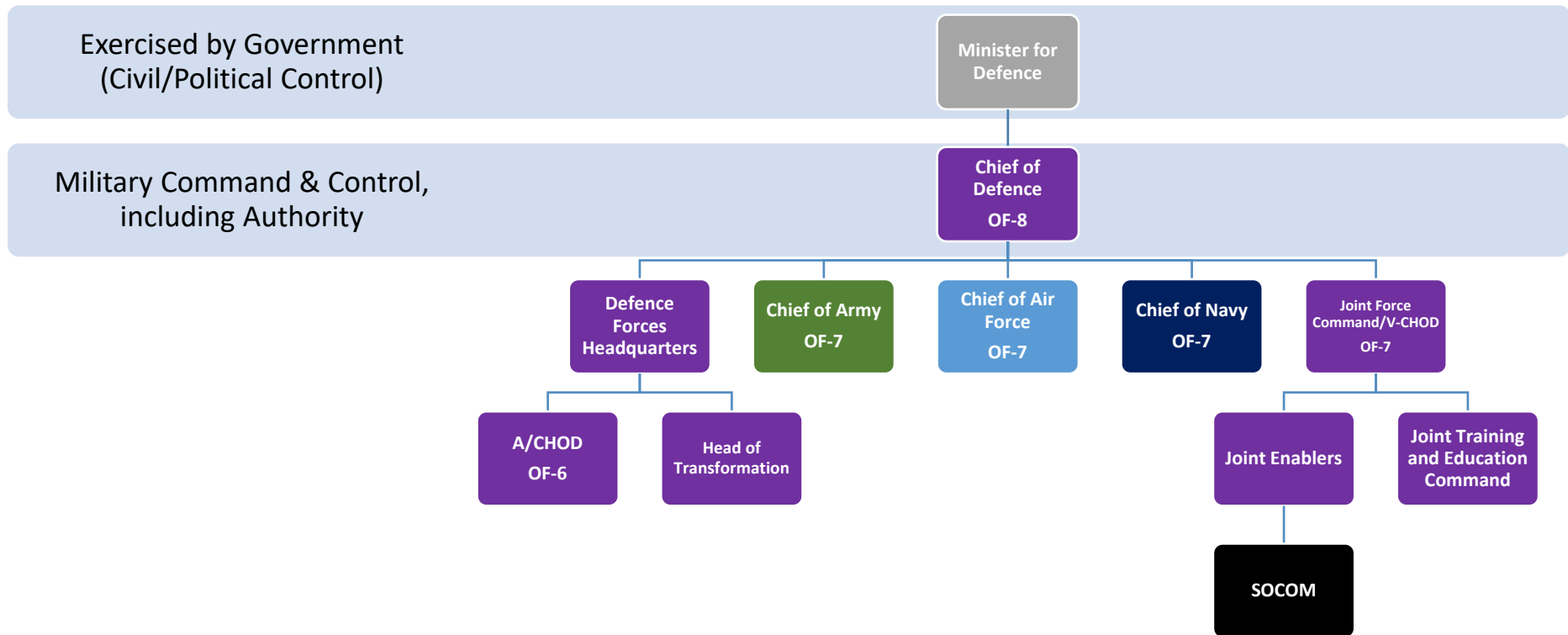
The proposed structure includes two new additional OF-7 posts, however the overall force design should minimise additional high-level posts as internal restructuring will be required

for each service, including the Joint Force Command. The high-level additions identified by the Commission bring the Defence Forces in line with other military forces and should significantly enhance the Command and Control structure.

The Commission understands that the Government's 2003 decentralisation programme was partially implemented with the relocation of the Department's civil branches, and some elements of DFHQ, from Dublin to Newbridge, Co. Kildare in 2010. However, due to the financial crash, the relocation of the remaining elements of DFHQ from Dublin to the Curragh, Co. Kildare, as planned, did not take place. This has now left DFHQ split between Dublin and Newbridge. The Commission recognises the challenges caused by bilocation of DFHQ and believes that this matter should be addressed immediately.

Each of the Offices and roles outlined in Figure 7.2 below are presented in Appendix 6, and are created to provide clear lines of Command and Control, and maximise jointness throughout the future Defence Forces.

Figure 7.2 – Proposed Future High-Level Command and Control Structure.



7.4 Service/Component Structures

The following sections provides an overview of the Commission's analysis of items that should be considered when deciding on the most suitable structures for the three components of land, air and sea, including Special Operations Forces (SOF). These observations reflect analysis conducted by the Commission and information received via the public consultation process and during visits to various Defence Forces' installations. The Commission recognises that in any large organisation, change is a constant feature and that Defence Forces structures should be kept under review to ensure that the organisation remains agile, flexible and adaptive and keeps pace with its evolving culture.

The time has come for the DF to realign its three arms into a more streamlined structure. The Future Force concept for the DF should be based upon the geopolitical realities of the state. We are a small island nation with a moderately sized land mass and a very large maritime domain and territorial skies.

Submission from a member of the public

Under the proposals below, the Army would undergo a higher level of structural transformation than the other two services, as the current structure does not provide for a designated head of the Army, and there is presently no Army headquarters. In keeping with international best practice, the Air Corps and Naval Service should become services, on par with the Army, and will also require reform of their top level structures in addition to contributing to a joint strategic command at Defence Forces Headquarters and Joint Force Command. Additionally, the Commission sees significant merit in each Service using camp staffs for routine garrison responsibilities, thereby prioritising military personnel for military taskings. While this organisational change will present challenges, the Commission believes that such transformation is necessary in order to create an integrated future force.

7.4.1 Army Structures

The Commission has identified the following key issues with the current Army structure:

- The current brigade system is primarily two regional administrative structures.
- In the current structure, the brigades are not deployable and do not align to international standards in terms of their strength or capabilities.
- Each brigade has a wide geographical footprint and wide spread of aid to the civil power (ATCP) and aid to the civil authority (ATCA) tasks.
- Current problems are exacerbated by a number of factors including the fact that the brigades are currently 9% understrength.
- The current force generation process for overseas missions is sub-optimal at many levels and negatively impacts on Command and Control and unit cohesion, and severely impacts on home units.
- The current battalions do not align to NATO standards, are under-staffed and under-resourced.
- Current Combat Support and Combat Service Support elements are inadequate.
- Due to their regional imbalance, small size, and current disposition, the battalions are overburdened with routine duties, unit administration and logistics tasks, and are unable to train at a sufficient level which impacts on their operational capability.
- Due to the lack of an adequate training establishment, demands from the Defence Forces Training Centre are placing a significant strain on the battalion resources.

In the light of these observations, the Commission believes there is an urgent need to restructure the Army into a more agile and flexible force structure that can meet current and future operational taskings.

In considering the future structure of the Army⁴⁵, the Commission has noted a number of key factors that require action. These include the lack of unity of command across the Army, the need for an overall joint approach in future force design, the critical lack of enabling and sustainment elements, the Army's current disposition including a lack of regional balance, and the urgent requirement to enhance combat effectiveness at unit level. In the future Army, a number of critical enablers including medical services, intelligence, and policing should be provided by elements under joint command and these elements are considered elsewhere in this report.

In relation to unity of command, the Commission concludes that a Chief of Army is necessary to act as the professional head of the Army, reporting directly to the CHOD, and should be supported by a Deputy Chief of Army (OF-6). In addition to commanding the land component, the Chief of Army should be responsible for raising, training and sustaining Army elements to meet current and future operational requirements, and ensuring goals set by the CHOD and Government are met. He/she should be the principal advisor to the CHOD on Army matters.

The Chief of the Army should be supported by a staff aligned to the G1-G9 system, which should be responsible for the administration and management of all units under its command. The Commission believes that Army Headquarters should be centrally located, with sub-commands providing an adequate national disposition. A post of Army Sergeant Major should be created and located in Army Headquarters.

An appropriate regional disposition is an effective mechanism for the recruitment and retention of highly skilled and motivated personnel into the Army and Army Reserve. People are the critical component of all future defence capability development and the Army therefore must be positioned to maximise its talent recruiting pool, which indicates a need to offer employment where people wish to live and work in the future. The Commission notes the increased emphasis placed on an enhanced regional footprint in other armed forces including during the Belgian Army re-organisation, the Netherlands White Paper on Defence 2020, US Armed Forces innovation and recruitment activities, and in the recently published British Army Future Soldier guidelines document.

⁴⁵ In advance of reaching its recommendation, the Commission carefully examined a range of options including:

- Retention of the current two all arms brigade structure and return to a three all arms brigade structure;
- Establishment of a single deployable and operationally effective all arms brigade supported by a combat service support brigade;
- Establishment of a single all arms brigade with combat service regiments remaining under Army and/or Joint Command;
- Establishment of a light infantry brigade and combat support brigade;
- Creation of a regimental system for all Corps under an Army HQ with a formation level deployable HQ;
- A regional structure (eight) aligned with major emergency planning areas;
- A regional structure (three) aligned with current national planning and administrative boundaries under an Army HQ with a formation level deployable HQ;
- Establishment of up to five permanent battlegroups with varying capabilities and specialities; and
- An infantry only service with the disbandment of combat support units and limited combat service support capabilities.

The Army for most of its history was broadly structured on a regional basis, firstly as nine regional commands and later as three,⁴⁶ before changing to three brigades and finally to the current two brigade structure. The current structure of two conventional all-arms brigades was implemented without an extensive force design and analysis process, and arose from public sector wide efforts at reducing organisational headcounts in 2011. This reorganisation has led to a number of anomalies, including reduced personnel numbers in the country's two largest urban centres and career progression opportunities being heavily skewed towards the Eastern region.

In light of this, the Commission recommends that the future disposition and structures of the Army be regionally balanced. This balance should ensure that the Army has access to the widest possible talent pool for recruitment purposes and stands a greater chance of retaining quality people over the long term. The future Army should disperse its forces in line with a new regional structure that ensures a critical mass of permanent and reserve forces in each region and that will allow for adequate recruitment, retention and career progression within the organisation. Both the Army Equitation School and Defence Forces School of Music, incorporating the Army bands, should fall under the command of the Chief of Army.

Many of the recommendations in this report are sequential, and in the absence of a Government policy statement in relation to the level of ambition for the Defence Forces it would be premature for the Commission to recommend a definitive future structure for the Army. However, the Commission is recommending a number of force design principles and parameters for developing the future Army.

A fundamental redesign of existing Army structures is required and the Commission recommends that the CHOD initiate an immediate force design process assisted by external experts with access to international military expertise. A detailed force design analysis is required to properly assess the second and third order effects of any proposed structure, taking into account the Army's roles in national defence, peace support operations and supporting national resilience. The force design process should comply with the principles and parameters outlined below, and be consistent with the overall implementation architecture proposed in Chapter 11. The implementation of this restructuring should be gradual and phased at unit level to avoid damaging disruptions to force generation and a loss of key personnel.

Principles

The new Army structure should support the Government assigned level of ambition by being able to:

- Make a meaningful contribution to national defence.
- Facilitate full integration of Army Reserve sub-units and personnel into Army units and Headquarters.
- Sustainably generate appropriate force packages for overseas operations.
- Provide a regional dispersion to facilitate national resilience operations.
- Support recruitment, retention and career development regionally.

⁴⁶ Southern, Eastern, and Western.

Parameters

The new Army structure should:

- Include an Army Headquarters (HQ), and a number of regional formations or groups with clear Command and Control reporting lines.
- Include the capacity to deploy a minimum of one formation level HQ to take command of major land operations and/or land exercises.
- Be redesigned based on a regional dispersion in order to maximise Permanent and Reserve recruitment and retention, and to facilitate national resilience operations.
- Ensure coherent external liaison with state agencies and local authorities at national, regional and local levels.
- Incorporate realistic spans of control.
- Allow for Combat and Combat Support units of appropriate size⁴⁷.
- Amalgamate Combat Support units into single large regiments, with each regiment located in one region/area.
- Develop specialised air manoeuvre and amphibious infantry battalion groups habitually associated with the proposed Air Force and Navy in Dublin and Cork.
- Establish specialisations for all infantry battalions (e.g. Mechanised, CBRN Defence, Recce, Public Order and Civil Assistance).
- Facilitate an operations and training cycle, framed within a labour hours budget and compliant with the Working Time Directive, to support training, development and the provision of force elements at readiness.
- Provide camp staffs in all locations in order to improve the deployability of operational units by releasing them from garrison responsibilities.

7.4.2 Air Force

In the context of the importance of service parity, the Commission considers that it would be appropriate to change the service name from Irish Air Corps to Irish Air Force.

In considering the future structure of the Air Force, the Commission believes that a Chief of the Air Force is necessary, and should be supported by a Deputy Chief of Air Force (OF-6). This role should be responsible for raising, training and sustaining Air Force elements to meet present and future Defence Forces operational requirements, including joint operations. In addition to commanding the Air Force, the Chief of the Air Force should have additional responsibilities which may include: providing advice to the CHOD on matters relating to the Air Force, the implementation of policies, plans, and programmes in relation to the Air Force, and the management of the Air Force and its contribution to the performance of the Defence Forces, including its future capabilities and sustainability, with a focus on having units at high states of readiness.

The Chief of Air Force should have the ability to assign command to subordinate units as necessary in order to maximise the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the Air Force. The Air Force Headquarters would be responsible for the administration and management of all units under its command and should utilise the A1-A9 system. The post of Sergeant Major of the Air Force should be created and located in Air Force Headquarters.

⁴⁷ Minimum of 560 permanent personnel for Infantry Battalions, 500 for Artillery Regiments and 450 for Cavalry Regiments.

In the event that a primary air radar capability is introduced, as recommended in Chapter 6, the Chief of the Air Force should be responsible for maintaining a Recognised Air Picture to ensure that Irish territorial airspace and Irish controlled airspace are fully monitored and that any infringements on Irish sovereignty are detected and responded to.

The Air Force should comprise of a structure that can manage, maintain and administer a modern and balanced fleet of aircraft. As part of this structure, the Commission has also recognised the need for the immediate introduction of a Military Air Regulator, separate from the Air Force chain of command, to provide independent oversight of military aviation safety and licencing on behalf of the Minister for Defence.

The future Air Force should have the ability to rapidly deploy a temporary command post to other national airports to support defence operations and ATCP/ATCA taskings. Air Command should focus on developing the capability of the Air Force for national defence operations, and should routinely exercise air elements as a fleet and as part of joint operations.

7.4.3 Navy

In the context of the importance of service parity, the Commission considers that it would be appropriate to change the service name from Irish Naval Service to Irish Navy.

In considering the future structure of the Navy, the Commission believes that a Chief of the Navy is necessary, and should be supported by a Deputy Chief of Navy (OF-6). This role should be responsible for raising, training and sustaining the maritime force elements to meet present and future Defence Forces operational requirements. In addition to commanding the Navy, the Chief of the Navy should have additional responsibilities which may include: providing advice to the CHOD on matters relating to the Navy, the implementation of policies, plans, and programmes in relation to the Navy, and the management of the Navy and its contribution to the performance of the Defence Forces, including its future capabilities and sustainability, with a focus on having units at high states of readiness.

The Chief of the Navy should be responsible for maintaining an enhanced national Recognised Maritime Picture (RMP) that will monitor Irish territorial waters and Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone, and any infringements on Irish sovereignty would be detected and responded to. In developing a national RMP, the Navy should operate jointly with the Air Force and utilise maritime patrol aircraft and surface patrols to conduct surveillance, as well as utilising maritime UAVs, satellite technology and coastal radar. The RMP should be shared under existing protocols with other EU member states as part of the MARSUR project.

The Chief of Navy should have the ability to assign command to subordinate units as necessary in order to maximise the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the Navy. The Navy Headquarters should be responsible for the administration and management of all units under its command, and employ the N1-N9 system. The post of Warrant Officer of the Navy should be created and located in Navy Headquarters.

The Navy should comprise of a structure that can manage, maintain and administer a modern and balanced fleet. Naval Command should focus on developing the capability of the Navy for national defence operations, and routinely exercise naval elements as a fleet and as part of

joint operations. The Commission recommends that the Naval Service Diving Section should be modernised with the establishment of a Defence Forces' School of Diving responsible for all military professional diving training, and a Diving Safety Office, reporting directly to the Chief of the Navy, to provide oversight on the governance of diving safety, standards and procedures.

7.4.4 Irelands' Special Operations Force (IRL SOF)

The Commission believes that the Army Ranger Wing (ARW) should be renamed as Ireland's Special Operations Force (IRL SOF) to align to international norms.

As noted in Chapter 6, the White Paper project focussed on enhancing the capabilities of the ARW highlighted the requirement for additional personnel in order to provide administrative and logistic support. However, it is now strongly recommended that the implementation of the project report is expedited. Additionally, the Commission is concerned that the support duties referred to are currently being carried out by highly trained SOF operatives and this is having a negative impact on the overall development of SOF in the Defence Forces.

In creating IRL SOF, the Commission proposes that the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) is organised directly under the Joint Force Command. This role should encompass raising and training IRL SOF force elements to meet present and future Defence Forces' operational requirements. In addition to commanding SOCOM, the Special Operations Commander should have the following primary responsibilities: to provide advice to the Joint Force Commander on matters relating to IRL SOF; the implementation of policies, plans, and programmes in relation to IRL SOF; and the management of IRL SOF and its contribution to the performance of the Defence Forces including its future capabilities and sustainability, with a focus on having units at high states of readiness. This observation is important in the context of a Government decision to deploy IRL SOF overseas in full SOF roles, as referred to in Chapter 4.

The Special Operations Commander should report to the Joint Force Commander and should assign command to subordinate units as necessary in order to maximise the operational efficiency and effectiveness of IRL SOF. IRL SOF should co-locate permanent Air and Maritime Task Groups in Casement Aerodrome and Haulbowline Naval base.

In fulfilling ATCP taskings, the Commission proposes that IRL SOF should have the capability to provide daily deterrent capability nationally (at high readiness) in order to be prepared to provide an on-island response for tier one SOF related roles, in support of An Garda Síochána. IRL SOF should continue to provide specialist expertise for covert intelligence and counter espionage activities, where appropriate and under the relevant legislation. IRL SOF should have the capacity to support the An Garda Síochána across a spectrum of specialist roles. IRL SOF should be fully resourced and equipped to meet all taskings assigned to it, including organisational resilience through an adequate SOF Reserve.

7.5 Military Intelligence

The White Paper on Defence 2015 states that Military Intelligence will continue to provide regular security assessments to the Minister for Defence and the Department of Defence in respect of state security and the safety and security of the Defence Forces' personnel

deployed overseas on peace support operations. It will also continue to liaise with An Garda Síochána as appropriate in relation to matters of common concern.

Primary legislation outlines the scope of security services provided to the State by An Garda Síochána, including protecting the State from terrorism, espionage, sabotage, foreign interference, and preventing the subversion of parliamentary democracy, whether from sources within the state or not. The Commission notes that the roles and responsibilities of Military Intelligence are less well defined in law⁴⁸ - unlike many comparator countries where the military have clearly defined roles in relation to intelligence.

The Commission is clear that Military Intelligence has an important role in monitoring security threats to the State. It plays a unique role in leveraging military intelligence internationally with regard to threats to the State, in assessing threat levels to overseas missions and potential overseas missions, and in relation to the internal security of the Defence Forces. A positive working relationship with An Garda Síochána is crucial. While acknowledging that regular communications take place between Military Intelligence and the Garda Security and Intelligence Section, and also between the Chief of Staff and the Garda Commissioner on intelligence matters, there is a concern about the need for greater clarity in relation to the gathering, analysis and use of information for intelligence purposes and the sharing of such information between the two agencies. In this regard, the Commission believes that information should be collected once, and there should be clarity around the purpose for which information is collected and what is done with it subsequently, including the sharing of information and intelligence between agencies. As such, the Commission considers that some overarching legal and governance framework is urgently needed to provide greater guidance and clarity in relation to the roles of both agencies and to ensure optimum co-operation and collaboration at all times.

In this context, the Commission also notes the pending establishment of an Independent Examiner under the proposed new policing legislation which, inter alia, will have the power to review the conduct of particular security operations. The powers of this Independent Examiner will cover both intelligence actors.

Within the Defence Forces, appropriate new structures will need to be put in place aligning with the high-level Command and Control recommendations made earlier in this chapter. In line with developments in other countries where military intelligence services have modernised their structures with the integration of land, air and naval intelligence, including geo-intelligence and signals intelligence. The Defence Forces should adopt a new joint approach to Military Intelligence, under the remit of the Joint Force Commander, comprising intelligence staff working at the strategic level in DFHQ and associated force elements of the Army, Air Force and Navy. Finally, any future structures must remain cognisant of Section 6.7 in Chapter 6, which outlines the need for close coordination with the National Cyber Security Centre, An Garda Síochána and other relevant agencies, given the strong interdependences associated with managing cyber taskings.

⁴⁸ The Defence Forces are enabled by legislation to carry out intelligence gathering activities, specifically; the Interception of Postal Packets and Telecommunications Messages (Regulation) Act 1993, the Criminal Justice (Surveillance) Act 2009, and the Communications (Retention of Data) Act 2011.

7.6 Future Cyber and Counter-Hybrid Structures

Chapter 2 of this report clearly delineates the increasing prevalence of risks associated with nefarious cyber, hybrid and asymmetric activity. Allied to this, the Defence Forces attack surface is also increasing as Defence network access is required for more platforms such as deployed naval vessels, overseas troop missions, aviation airframes and the Defence Forces' proposed Software Defined Radio communications suite. Military forces are increasingly reliant on cyberspace and this reliance creates specific risks, as they have a unique role as a state-sanctioned entity authorised to apply the use of force. Whilst these new systems bring significant improvements to the management of operations, they are also prime targets for adversaries in conflict situations. Command and Control and situational awareness are highly dependent on IT networks. In addition, if the Defence Forces is to become a technologically advanced force, the importance of these cyber secure aspects will become increasingly evident in relation to the use of cutting edge technologies and modernising of military systems.

Currently, the function of the Defence Forces' Communications and Information Systems (CIS) Corps is to provide, support and maintain the necessary CIS for the Command, Control, Administration and Cyber Defence of the Defence Forces. As outlined in the White Paper on Defence 2015, the primary focus of the Defence Forces is on retaining the capacity to protect Defence systems and networks. At present, the CIS function is delivered by a combination of Army, Air Corps and Naval Service CIS units which enable Defence Forces' land, air and maritime operations. These CIS units are commanded by their respective GOC/Flag Officer, while the CIS Company in Defence Forces Headquarters is operationally tasked by the Director of CIS Branch (known as J6). In terms of cyber domain defence, this is currently supported by a Computer Incident Response Team/Information Assurance (CIRT/IA) section within the Headquarters' CIS Company. The Commission has noted that the Defence Forces' Cyber Security Strategy is currently out of date, and this needs to be updated in line with best international practice.

The Commission believes that current structures are inadequate to meet CIS and cyber operational environmental challenges and recommends the creation of an Joint Cyber Defence Command, to be led by the Head of Joint Cyber Defence Command, who should manage the Defence Forces' IT Services, CIS Services and other relevant taskings. The Commander would direct and control the three main categories of military cyberspace operations, comprising: defensive cyberspace operations (i.e. ensuring the security of all digital systems against attack and espionage); intelligence/ISR operations (i.e. maintaining internal and external threat awareness in the digital environment up to limited strategic reconnaissance for the Irish context); and offensive cyberspace operations for defensive purposes in line with evolving norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace (in accordance with Irish foreign and defence policy, as described in Chapter 6). As described below, the Joint Cyber Defence Command would sit under the Joint Force Command (at LOA 2), whereas international good practice would indicate that at LOA 3 it could sit alongside the other services and/or report directly to the CHOD.

International best practice points to a need to establish cyberspace as a domain of operations to ensure defence as effectively as in the air, on land, and at sea. The future Defence Forces cyber capability must be able to protect, defend and provide a high level of resilience to

Defence Forces networks, platforms and systems, including deployed force elements, therefore ensuring continued operational efficacy across all domains. The key enabling attributes of this necessary evolution will be the people, processes, policies and technological solutions required to support and enable the technological demands of the future force.

Typical elements required to execute cyber operations would include: a Computer Emergency Response Team; Rapid Reaction Teams; Liaison Teams and deployable cyber defence capabilities. The mission of the Joint Cyber Defence Command should be to conduct full spectrum cyberspace operations for defensive purposes (up to limited offensive and strategic reconnaissance capability) in line with national policy guidelines to defend military networks and systems, to support both the cybersecurity and security of the State, and to enable continued effective Defence Forces operations in line with national and international law.

The structure must enable the employment of the full range of capabilities at all times to actively deter, defend against, and counter the full spectrum of cyber threats, including those conducted as part of hybrid campaigns, in accordance with international law.

The Commission notes that a number of structural approaches are evolving in European countries relating to hybrid activity which can comprise physical and subversive elements in addition to cyber components. Some military structures comprise cyber aspects only, whereas others aim to integrate counter-hybrid capability into their cyber functions or structures. There is also some precedent of military forces having a dedicated hybrid defence structure within their Ministry of Defence, typically civil-military in nature and comprising a modest staff size. While there is not yet a singular approach evident, it is clear that there will be a requirement to continually review and adjust future CIS, cyber defence and counter-hybrid structures to take highly probable dynamic changes into account and to keep up with international best practice. Given the unconventional nature of much of this activity, there is a further need to integrate high levels of civil-military engagement. The Commission further notes that there is an important need to structurally integrate the interlinkages between counter-hybrid warfare, full spectrum cyber, information operations, space, the specialist Reserve as well as CIS, Military Intelligence and electronic warfare and other areas.

In this regard, the Commission notes a distinction between countering hybrid warfare and preparation for combined operations vis-à-vis peacetime hybrid subversion techniques where the Defence Forces could potentially, on foot of an ATCP or ATCA request, contribute to and support the domestic response and situational awareness, drawing in particular on distinct military capability such as Military Intelligence where peacetime activity occurs below the threshold of warfare.

7.7 Future Military Police Service

The Commission believes that the Military Police Branch, the Army Military Police Corps, the Air Corps Provost Section and Naval Provost Section should be amalgamated into a single joint Military Police Service. This service should be removed from the operational chain of command and the Director of the Service⁴⁹ should report directly to the Vice CHOD. The

⁴⁹ The Director of the Military Police Service should act as Provost Marshal and Commander of all Military Police personnel.

Director's role should be a tri service appointment with operational independence in the performance of their duties and be supported by a joint staff.

The future Military Police Service should be a specialist service and policing should be a specialist career stream for all ranks. The current practice of officers undertaking Military Policing roles for short periods up to and including at Director level should cease. Given the small size of the Military Police Service, opportunities for rank progression may be limited and satisfactory career development measures will be required to ensure that this career stream is attractive to potential members.

There is currently no external oversight of policing services within the Defence Forces and no independent complaints process exists for the investigation of alleged Military Police misconduct or negligence. In addition, regular independent review and assessment of the quality of policing services is not undertaken. This lack of structured oversight is in stark contrast to the numerous oversight and complaints mechanisms for other policing and investigative bodies in the State. This is an unsatisfactory position. In the view of the Commission, robust and independent oversight and periodic review would greatly enhance the military policing service benefiting the victims of crime, safeguarding the rights of suspects and increasing trust in the wider systems of military discipline and justice.

Finally, the Commission notes the recent New Zealand experience of appointing senior civilian police officers to honorary and advisory roles in the Military Police. This approach ensures that a small Military Police Service has immediate access to up-to-date guidance and advice on advances in investigatory procedures and techniques, and also strengthens collaboration between the civil and military police services. In this context, the Commission sees merit in the appointment of a serving or retired senior investigating officer from An Garda Síochána as a part time advisor to the Director of the Military Police.

7.8 Training and Education Structures

The Commission believes that all services, including IRL SOF, should have their own service schools, warfare training centres and tactical training centres that provides all tactical and technical education to officers, NCOs and other ranks. The training centres should be responsible for doctrine development, standardisation, and quality control of knowledge/competency in their own service. Furthermore, all doctrinal publications should be centrally managed by the proposed Doctrine and Concepts Centre to ensure that adequate quality control is maintained.

The Commission recommends that the development of a National Defence Academy would be an invaluable asset to both the Defence Forces and the State. The Defence Forces should provide joint training in this Academy. In addition to military training, the Academy should provide military training as well as Leadership training for NCO upwards and offer courses of interest to the wider civil and public service. The Academy should additionally be the focal point for Military Intelligence and cyber education to enhance Defence Forces operational capabilities and could provide training to other relevant national security actors and Department of Defence personnel. The Commission also recommends the establishment of an Apprentice School. Analysis of emerging trends highlights that technical skillsets and IT oriented qualifications will be required to support a tech-enabled force and it is evident that

the demand for these skills will continue to increase.

7.9 International Training

International training is a force enabler and should continue to form part of the professional military development for Defence Forces personnel of all ranks, including reservists. This should focus on developing core service capabilities and planning processes, to ensure that the ability to contribute to national and international joint operations remains valid. A relatively small Defence Forces such as Ireland's needs to maximise its exposure to international expertise. The Defence Forces, therefore, should explore appropriate foreign courses and maximise participation.

In addition to the points above, and based on the current limitations of Defence Forces training lands, and the need to enhance interoperability via international exercises, consideration should be given to Defence Forces participation (across all domains) in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) concept⁵⁰.

7.10 Reserve Defence Force Training

All three elements of the RDF should align their training to the syllabi used by the PDF and should ensure that interoperability is a key focus of Reservetraining. RDF personnel should be required to complete joint training courses and the RDF should have full access to the training facilities provided throughout the Defence Forces.

7.11 Veterans Affairs

The Commission recommends the establishment of an Office of Veterans' Affairs which would coordinate veteran support across government departments and local authorities, would enhance collaboration between recognised veterans' associations, would provide transition support for retirees, and would provide much needed advice, assistance and support to veterans and their families.

7.12 Disposition of the Defence Forces

The Commission examined the current disposition of the Defence Forces, including a review of the current Defence Forces numbers and locations for the Permanent and Reserve elements⁵¹, and this is outlined in Appendix 7. During Commission visits it became apparent that the Defence Forces has a large and scattered estate, and while some of the buildings were in very good condition, it was clear, even without a formal survey, that many buildings were in a poor state and require urgent attention. The Commission does not have the necessary skills or information to make detailed judgements on the optimum future disposition of the Defence Forces. However, the Commission believes that once decisions have been made on the future structures of the Defence Forces and the size of the future force, as recommended in this report, it would then be possible to conduct a focused and detailed review of the Defence estate.

⁵⁰ The JEF concept includes the following countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The JEF undertakes a series of demanding exercises that are designed to ensure that participant nations are ready to deal with security challenges across the spectrum of competition and conflict.

⁵¹ All details are correct as of the 31 December 2020.

Such a technical review should be undertaken by appropriately qualified professionals, drawn from the Defence Forces and external experts as appropriate, who should be tasked with setting out options for the development of the Defence estate to meet the future needs of the Defence Forces, based on the structures selected. By conducting a detailed analysis of the most suitable locations, scoping the development works required, and identifying the infrastructure each service requires, the Commission believes it will be possible to provide a value for money approach that ensures the most efficient and effective use of the Defence budget.

A related key issue that personnel repeatedly raised with the Commission was the provision of accommodation and housing. Remaining conscious of the decision to phase out married quarters, the challenges in the current housing market, and the need for Defence Forces' personnel to move frequently, the Commission believes that solutions to this organisational issue must be found in part within the scope of general housing policy, while recognising the specific locations and needs of the Defence Forces. Furthermore, any review of accommodation requirements should include a consideration of how to radically speed up and increase the ambition of the upgrading of single living-in accommodation that is currently underway, as the Commission believes that it would serve as a cost-effective retention measure.

7.13 Conclusions

In conducting its analysis, the Commission has sought to design a modern and agile Defence Forces with services that are capable of operating independently or jointly as part of an integrated joint force. The proposed structures align the Defence Forces to the accepted international standards for comparator countries and reflects the national defence policy, while providing sufficient flexibility to allow for any potential policy changes (i.e. the force structure is scalable) as well as responsiveness to changing national and global risk environments.

Building on the proposed changes to high-level Command and Control, the structures proposed should reside under a CHOD and will support a Joint Force Command, including the Defence Forces Headquarters. This ensures a clear delineated chain of command which will enhance operational capability and provide a coherent level of authority throughout the Defence Forces. The approach used will ensure that the structures proposed achieve synergies across joint capability development, thereby enhancing organisational efficiencies and effectiveness in a resource aware environment. Key to achieving this ambitious and radical vision for a future joint Defence Forces will be a proactive implementation team to ensure that the proposed changes are inculcated within the organisational culture.

Finally, the future structure of the Defence Forces must be specifically designed to ensure that Ireland has a future oriented Defence Forces that can provide credible force options at readiness to fulfil the military taskings assigned by Government.

7.14 Recommendations

The Commission recommends:

- **That the high level Command and Control structures of the Defence Forces be aligned to international best practice, including;**
 - The creation of a CHOD, supported by a Vice CHOD, with the appropriate military command and control authority of the Defence Forces at the strategic level, including the ability to assign OPCOM, OPCON, TACOM and TACON.
 - The creation of a Defence Forces' Headquarters that will report to the CHOD, who will be assisted by the A/CHOD and the Head of Transformation.
 - The creation of three Service Chiefs, and Deputy Service Chiefs, for the land, air and maritime forces, and a Joint Force Commander, who should also be the Vice-CHOD, supported by a Deputy Commander. This high-level leadership team may be formalised as a Command Board or similar title, and should support the CHOD in managing issues connected to the development of the Joint Force.
 - The Army, Air Corps and Naval Service should become services, have service headquarters, and have parity of esteem.
 - That the SEAC position, currently being trialled, is made permanent for the purposes of bringing the expertise and experience of the senior NCO appointee to the top table, including being a member of the Defence Staff. Additionally, each Service Chief should be supported by a service Sergeant Major/Warrant Officer who would sit on their respective service staff.
 - That the supporting joint functions are staffed by all three services, from all ranks.
 - That the ARW should be renamed IRL SOF and include permanent Air and Maritime Task Groups in Casement Aerodrome and Haulbowline Naval Base. Implementation of the current White Paper Project Report should also be expedited.
- **That the Army be urgently restructured by completing the following:**
 - The Chief of Defence to initiate an immediate force design process assisted by external experts with access to international military expertise, and to include a detailed force design analysis.
 - The creation of a more agile and flexible force structure that can meet current and future operational taskings.
 - That the future disposition and structures of the Army be regionally balanced.
- **That jointness be inculcated throughout the Defence Forces by:**
 - Prioritising training institutions, with an emphasis on routine joint exercises to prove future force operational capabilities for national defence and overseas operations.
 - The introduction of joint operational and leadership training courses at junior and senior level for both officers and NCOs.
- **That the Defence Forces seek to further integrate with whole-of-government processes, with a focus on contributing to national security and national resilience through ATCP and ATCA operations.**
- **The modernisation of Military Intelligence, to include:**
 - The role and functions of Military Intelligence be urgently clarified and underpinned by appropriate legislation within the context of a coherent national intelligence architecture.
 - The development of an overarching legal and governance framework to ensure optimum coordination and collaboration between the Defence Forces and An Garda Síochána on intelligence matters.
 - A fully joint approach to Intelligence within the Defence Forces under the Joint Force Commander.

- Appropriate arrangements in relation to oversight in relation to intelligence should be set out in the legislation.
- **The enhancement of Defence Forces structures across the cyber domain, to include:**
 - The creation of a Joint Cyber Defence Command that should manage, Defence Forces IT Services, CIS Services and Cyber Defence.
 - Incorporating practical lessons identified from comparator countries and EU Member States' maturing cyber commands.
 - Updating and publishing a cyber defence strategy in line with best international practice and standards.
 - Increased civil-military engagement across Government on the development of appropriate structures and processes for countering hybrid warfare, learning from current international experience.
- **The creation of a Joint Military Police Service, independent of the operational chain of command, with enhanced electronic and analytical supports, and with oversight, inspection and complaints mechanisms also established.**
- **Modernisation of the Naval Service Diving Section with the establishment of a Defence Forces' School of Diving, and a diving safety office reporting directly to the Chief of the Navy.**
- **The development of a National Defence Academy and an Apprentice School to support a future tech-enabled force.**
- **The establishment of an Office of Veterans' Affairs to coordinate veteran supports, and provide advice and assistance to veterans and their families.**
- **That a focused and detailed review of the Defence estate be carried out by appropriately qualified professionals prior to decisions on the optimum future disposition of the Defence Forces.**

Chapter 8: People as the Defence Forces' Key Strategic Resource

Section 1

- ❖ Strategic HR
- ❖ Career Progression
- ❖ Promotion Systems
- ❖ Training

8.1.1 Introduction

The Commission's Terms of Reference specifically require it to set out a strategic perspective on the Human Resources to fulfil the requirements of a more agile⁵² and adaptive⁵³ Defence Forces, in a manner congruent with modern society, while taking both labour market and public sector pay and personnel policies into account.

The Commission benefited greatly from the input of serving members of the Defence Forces across a number of fora. It was the case, however, that during the series of visits to military installations throughout the country, notable frustration was expressed regarding career progression, career planning and a myriad of other issues.

Such was the volume and range of issues raised that it would be impossible for the Commission to consider them all. Many are seen by the Commission as matters that have come to the fore arising from an absence of a strategic approach to Human Resources.

8.1.2 Strategic HR

The Commission has noted that the White Paper on Defence (2015), the subsequent White Paper Update (2019) and the Government's High Level Plan to implement the Report of the Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) (2019) all set out a significant number and range of projects relating to HR management issues that need to be implemented and prioritised.

While many of these will contribute to enabling a more strategic approach to Human Resources in the Defence Forces, it is apparent to the Commission, however, that the pace of implementation has been notably slow, with new priorities and insufficient resources dedicated to implementation being a clear impediment to sustaining progress in this area since 2016. Moreover, timelines envisaged for the remaining projects are too long to build the necessary momentum that is required to take a cohesive step into a modern way of thinking and acting strategically about HR in the Defence Forces.

More fundamentally, however, many of the issues raised in the Commission's engagement with members of the Defence Forces arise from HR being inappropriately treated as an operational management matter. There are various examples of this and the Commission believes that it is very clear that the Defence Forces urgently requires a far more modern and

⁵² Agile organisations mobilise quickly, are nimble, empowered to act, and make it easy for their members to act – McKinsey: The Five Trademarks of an Agile Organisation.

⁵³ Adaptable organisations are able to quickly detect shifts in the external environment, and flex appropriately – Deloitte: The Adaptable Organisation.

strategic approach to its human resources which needs to be re-positioned as a strategic core to ensure the future success of the organisation.

It is not possible for the Commission to address in detail all aspects that would underpin the long-term approaches to Strategic HR. However, the Commission has identified a number of specific measures which should be implemented, coupled with the allocation of additional resources in order to ensure the timely development of a modern level of capacity to provide the Defence Forces with the sophisticated strategic approach to HR management that is required. Moving to this way of thinking and working will require radical change in the organisation's capacity, viewpoint and behaviours.

Ultimately, a holistic approach that places the individual at the centre of a talent management system is required, with the right person placed in the right job, at the right time, regardless of rank and employment status⁵⁴. To optimise individual performance and enhance overall force readiness, the Defence Forces needs to both increase its recruiting pool and also recognise and develop the talent within the organisation. Moreover, modern HR management requires organisational flexibility which, for example, allows managers to review approved positions and, within budget, decide to reallocate them by quashing certain posts and creating others to meet changing circumstances and requirements of the organisation. In this regard, the Commission has noted the rigidity that is brought to bear on personnel numbers, in terms of their allocation across formations and ranks, as well as precise numbers in posts that attract specialist rates of pay, by the requirement in the Defence Acts for secondary legislation (known as the C.S.4) to be made each time a change in this regard is required. The Commission believes that to achieve the flexibility that is clearly necessary will require a change to the primary legislation. This and other modern approaches should be guided by a coherent and holistic approach to addressing HR strategically.

The Commission believes that implementation of a Strategic HR approach is both urgent and critical. The resources to enable this to be completed should be made available together with the expertise to implement it successfully. As such, a Strategic HR Change Leadership Team will need to be established comprising people with diverse change management and specific organisational management expertise. The team should be led by the externally recruited Head of Transformation, referred to in Chapter 7 (Section 7.3.2), who would operate at the level just below the Chief of Defence (CHOD). Appropriate external resources must be given to the Defence Forces for a five year period to partner with this team and to collaborate on successful implementation. The Commission would underline that in order to permit this transformation process to be appropriately organised and led, the CHOD should have responsibility for Strategic HR management. The CHOD should also be party to defence management negotiations with the representative associations.

8.1.3 Career Progression and Talent Management

Career progression is a core focus of a Strategic HR approach for organisations whose success is reliant on its people. Seen from an organisational perspective, it is an aspect of the reward systems, a motivator for achievement, a way of incentivising the development of skills, increased commitment to the organisation and the retention of talent. It rests on HR tools

⁵⁴ Permanent, Reserve or Civilian.

and processes including competencies frameworks, recruitment and selection processes, performance management, learning and development plans, HR data and analytics, and the other tools and approaches in the strategic management of people resources to meet the needs of the organisation. A future talent management system should create career structures and HR processes that manage talent, take account of personal and family needs and fundamentally offer more choice. It should provide competitive, attractive and flexible career paths that recognise that not all personnel wish to follow conventional career paths or timelines for promotion. The knowledge, skills and behaviours required for all roles should be mapped as part of a talent framework and individual talent and choice taken into consideration for postings.

The Commission has noted that just two White Paper implementation projects touch on career progression, and in a tangential way, while the Report of the PSpC from 2019 included survey data indicating that lack of career progression is a factor in serving personnel planning to leave the Defence Forces. The Commission is also conscious of the distinction that exists between career progression/development, and rank progression/promotion. In relation to the former, from its extensive engagement with serving personnel, the Commission has noted that, for some, development towards and ultimately the mastery of a skill, trade or particular niche role provides adequate progression while for others, rank progression, through promotion, is desired and in many instances personnel hope to achieve both.

It is the view of the Commission that the expectation among today's workforce is that an employer can clearly articulate the career progression path for inductees; the requirements for each level; the expected timeframe for moving from level to level; a clear, transparent and objective process for assessing candidates on the requirements, based on a competencies framework; the training, supports and encouragement provided for staff at every level to enable them to commit to their career progression; and an overall policy for a modern Defence Forces' Strategic HR that is resourced. These characteristics appear to be broadly absent in the Defence Forces.

As such, the Commission recommends that a comprehensive exercise is carried out by the Defence Forces that maps current patterns of career progression in terms of the competencies actually required at each level; access to training or experience required; the average, slowest and fastest progressions at each level; and, so that they can be reviewed, blockages identified and a plan for improvements developed and implemented. The Commission is aware that some of this work has been completed, and that more is underway or planned, but this should be prioritised and adequately resourced in order to be delivered in the immediate future. Allied to this, the Defence Forces should develop a career progression route map for all roles, starting with entry level and those roles that are experiencing higher attrition rates.

As a key enabler of Career Progression and building upon the recently published Defence Forces Professional Military Education Strategy (2021-24), the practice of performance management should include all personnel having a personal Continuous Professional Development plan and at least annual meetings with their commander to review their performance and competencies, to identify learning and development needs, and to outline career and educational objectives. All managers and supervisory staff should be trained to

communicate with their staff in this regard and to include development plans in their performance management work.

Despite organisational regulations, policies and procedures to support performance management, the constant movement of junior and senior officers, and staff shortages in supervisory positions, has seen significant decreases in effective performance management. Delivering effective performance management requires dedicated and skilled staff at the core of the organisation's HR function, and well trained supervisors and managers throughout the organisation who are given time to develop and mature in their role. The Commission believes that this requires commitment from both management and staff and will be helped by reformed promotion criteria and competitions that focus less on 'box ticking' or fulfilling certain categories of jobs, and instead focuses on performance in a given role and potential.

A dynamic also noted by the Commission is that, like every large organisation, important roles in the Defence Forces are filled by people who are skilled and continue do a good job, but do not wish to progress, or due to limited size of their career stream may be unable to competitively progress in rank, beyond their current level. Career progression for them can frequently be about continuing to perform at that level, training others, and making a valued contribution to the larger group. The Commission feels that, as elsewhere, in the Defence Forces there should be scope found to acknowledge this contribution in other ways than promotion, while managing the continuing high performance of such personnel at their existing level. Ways to value and reward these individuals could include Long Service Increments (which are dealt with separately in this chapter under Pay Structures – see 8.4.3), opportunities for secondment or external experience and provision of additional educational or training opportunities which would allow them to continue to focus on their core speciality.

The Commission has observed that a number of submissions received, in response to the public consultation exercise, advocate for the creation of a new rank of Lance Corporal in the Army and Air Corps. This proposal was also raised and supported during the Commission's visits to a number of military installations. Notably, many personnel of line Private rank are unwilling to travel long distances to undergo a long duration residential Potential Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Course, while engagements with technical personnel of Private rank revealed an unwillingness on their part to complete an arduous Infantry centric course where the skills taught are considered to be of little relevance to such personnel, who also tend to be older. Internationally, the Commission has observed that the rank of Lance Corporal is utilised as the first of the NCO ranks in the UK Armed Forces and as a senior private rank in the US Marine Corps. It is also common for this rank to serve as the first supervisory rank in specialist areas.

The Commission recommends the creation of a new rank of Lance Corporal in the Army and the Air Corps, and that consideration be given to whether there is a need for an equivalent rank in the Naval Service. The qualification course for this rank should be of a short duration and conducted in home units. The Commission believes that creation of a Lance Corporal rank would allow earlier rank progression for enlisted personnel with leadership potential. It would also offer unit commanders and senior NCOs an opportunity to assess the leadership ability of junior personnel before further advancement. The rank would also be useful for specialist

trades, allowing Privates to advance and carry out supervisory functions without the need to complete the full Potential NCO Course.

Separately, recognising the importance of the unique capabilities that the Naval Service Diving Section provide, the Commission recommends that a career stream is introduced, providing a recognised career path for Naval divers that permits rank progression for enlisted personnel.

The Commission also recommends, in line with the creation of a single joint Military Police Service (as recommended in Chapter 7, Section 7.7), provision of a specialist Military Police career stream for all ranks, with adequate career progression opportunities.

Finally, in relation to the Army Ranger Wing (ARW) (to be renamed IRL SOF as recommended in Chapter 7, Section 7.4.4), the Commission is supportive of proposals, that it has noted are currently under consideration, which would allow Sergeants and senior NCOs, who volunteer for IRL SOF service, to retain their existing rank throughout the IRL SOF training cycle. Furthermore, as such personnel would not have the experience or ability to serve as operators in IRL SOF in their existing rank (although they may merit promotion within IRL SOF in the future), they would initially serve at a lower rank on joining IRL SOF but there is merit in creating a 'shadow rank' system for such personnel, and other junior NCOs, which tracks their normal career path in their parent unit so as not to disadvantage the individual should he/she return to normal duties in the future. In essence, their substantive military rank should be placed in abeyance, until superseded by their IRL SOF worn rank, and those returning to their source specialisation, on completion of their tour with IRL SOF, should do so in line with their accrued seniority.

8.1.4 Promotion Systems

The Commission has noted that there is clearly confidence amongst serving personnel that the current systems for promotion are fairer to greater extents than previous iterations. The current systems reflect the considerable and commendable efforts of management and the Representative Associations to negotiate and agree changes to previous systems that removed erstwhile perceptions of unfairness.

Nevertheless, it has also been the Commission's experience that issues with rank progression arose repeatedly in consultations with many of the groups of personnel that provided input to the Commission. This is reflected also in the submissions received from serving and former members in response to the Commission's public consultation. Amongst the problems identified were the absence of adequate clarity and certainty in career paths; the lack of a process of engagement at individual level to provide clarity and a progression plan through that career path; blockages in promotions as a result of a number of factors including inaccessibility of required courses; a narrow concept of the skills and competencies that qualify applicants for progression (primarily centred on Army competencies); and a 'generalist soldiering', 'combat or infantry' focus that is plainly not appropriate for personnel in specialist Army roles and for the vast majority of Air Corps and Naval Service personnel. Numerous personnel of all ranks were also concerned that the current NCO promotion competition, although transparent and patently fair, is a disincentive to 'unit loyalty' and damaging 'esprit de corps'. Concerns were raised that the selection system for senior NCO career courses is

contributing to a 'box ticking' culture with NCOs having to undertake greater movements outside of their home garrison and complete multiple courses, many of no relevance to their primary roles.

The Commission has also noted the widespread concerns of serving personnel that the post 2012 structures of the Defence Forces no longer support adequate rank progression opportunities in the regions, with the current Army structure being skewed towards the eastern region. In addition, Air Corps and Naval Service personnel reported a limitation in career development opportunities and rank progression due to the small establishments of both services, and the notable lack of greater tri-service and joint structures at Defence Forces Headquarters level (with posts in the latter being strongly Army centric).

The Commission has concluded that while the current systems for promotion have served their purpose, they are no longer suitable and require urgent and significant overhaul. A redesigned process should, at its core, provide an open genuinely merit-based competitive system utilising a competency framework. Promotion processes should exist within a wider talent management system that is transparent. Based on the areas of acute blockages, the Commission believes that the Defence Forces should undertake a focused review that deals with the issues of access to promotion courses and which reviews the criteria for promotion and removes any service or gender biases. In relation to organisational and service leadership appointments, and in particular in relation to officers of flag rank and senior enlisted advisors, future promotion criteria should eliminate any service bias for tri service roles and any 'line' bias against specialist personnel.

The necessity for all officers to undertake long residential career courses for promotion in all career streams needs to be examined. The Commission notes the use of 'Command and Staff' and 'Staff' only streams in other countries and advocates for a similar approach in Ireland. A variety of senior management and specialist or niche roles are unlikely to require completion of Command and Staff courses, and Corps standard courses, short staff courses or post graduate qualifications should be sufficient for personnel to enter competitions for senior management posts in a staff only stream. This has the added benefit of ensuring that those with significant family or personal responsibilities outside of work are not discriminated against and can continue to progress. Personnel choosing a staff only stream should have the ability to undertake the necessary courses to re-enter a 'Command and Staff' stream if they wish later in their careers.

Additionally, objective and competitive selection processes for career courses need to be established. The Commission notes the emphasis placed on identifying potential 'high fliers' for early advancement, the recognition of demonstrated knowledge, skills and behaviours and the use of blinded file reviews and interviews, 360 degree appraisals and cognitive ability testing in other countries when selecting personnel for career courses. The Commission recommends the introduction of similar objective selection processes and a move away from the importance attached to service seniority.

Having considered the myriad issues raised, particularly during visits to installations all over the country where repeated dissatisfaction was expressed, among all ranks, with current

promotion processes, the Commission has established the following basic principles which underpin the various recommendations it has to make in this area.

- To allow for greater transparency, a set of clear criteria and competencies for promotion to each rank and for acceptance on to promotion courses should be established. These criteria should be easily accessible at any time and should be communicated to all potential candidates prior to any promotion competition or course.
- Promotion competitions should become open and truly competitive. This will require the removal of artificial barriers, such as time limits in rank for eligibility and restrictions on movements between line and technical roles. All personnel of substantive rank (i.e. no longer acting or on probation) should be eligible to enter promotion competitions for the next grade.
- All promotion competitions should be conducted by external bodies such as the Public Appointments Service and the Top Level Appointments Committee.
- National competitions are not always necessary and discrete competitions could be utilised at unit, formation and service level as appropriate for NCO positions. While previously concerns had been raised about the partiality of local unit interview boards, the utilisation of an external body will allow for greater fairness and impartiality in any future discrete competitions. Appropriate recognition of experience and knowledge associated with the unit, formation or service advertising an open position could also be factored into selection processes.
- A greater emphasis in promotion competitions should be placed on the performance of individuals in their assigned roles and their future potential, rather than the location, position or variety of previous appointments.
- HR policies and practices around promotions should be aligned with the objective that excellence in all roles, whether at unit, formation, service or Defence Forces Headquarters level, is equally valued and recognised. Promotion should not require continuous movement between regions and headquarters while the requirement and encouragement for officers to achieve a broad range of experience at the tactical, operational and strategic level at home and overseas is ambiguous and contributes to the perception of a 'box ticking' culture.
- Command and Staff and Staff only career streams should be introduced for senior management.
- The Defence Forces organisational structure should promote adequate rank progression opportunities within its future force structures at regional level, and allow for greater tri-service representation and rank progression at Defence Forces Headquarters level.

Finally, the Commission also recommends that practices should be developed of identifying and retaining valuable members of the Defence Forces who have either decided that promotion is not for them or who, due to their career stream, have limited potential for competitive rank progression. These practices should actively manage their retention through appropriate methods of reward, such as Long Service Increments, secondments with other agencies and enhanced educational and personal development opportunities.

8.1.5 Training

The Commission recognises that education and training are the cornerstone of military life and dictate the Defence Forces' operational capability and effectiveness both at home and

overseas. The existing military colleges and schools of excellence provide education and training to Defence Forces personnel and focus on different specialities. These include the Military College⁵⁵, which is part of the Defence Forces' Training Centre located at the Curragh, the Air Corps College⁵⁶ and the Naval College⁵⁷ which provide specialist training and education relevant to their services. Accreditation is provided under the National Framework of Qualifications for all learning conducted within the organisation through collaboration with higher education institutions.

To underpin the transformation to a modern Defence Forces, the Commission considers that, in addition to military education and training, an organisational leadership and development capability is required to lead, develop, train, communicate and influence. This is critical to the delivery of the strategically driven, connected, resourced, recognised and valued Irish Defence Forces of 2030 and beyond. In the early days of the transformation, some of this expertise will be brought into the Defence Forces, but investment in acquiring and growing this capability is crucial to sustainability. This new development should be championed by the CHOD, led by the Head of Transformation charged with implementing the transformation of the Defence Forces, and supported by the senior leader responsible for the people training and development programme.

The Commission has noted that there are also a number of educational schemes available to Defence Forces personnel to attend civilian educational institutions and welcomes the fact that, since its inception in 2012, the Defence Forces Leadership, Management and Defence Studies (LMDS) Programme for enlisted personnel had, by the end of 2020, seen over 1,400 such personnel conferred with awards by IT Carlow.

Allied to this, a Trainee Technician Scheme (TTS) is open to serving personnel who wish to pursue a trade in a particular technical discipline within the Defence Forces. This training generally takes four years to complete, after which period personnel are required to fulfil a service undertaking. Corps that utilise the TTS to train personnel include Engineers, Ordnance, Transport and Communications and Information Services. The Commission has noted that while the scheme provides welcome developmental options for line personnel who wish to specialise, and also serves as a 'pull factor' for some applicants who seek a career in the Defence Forces, there are a number of drawbacks. There is currently no establishment for trainee personnel, which means each entrant to the TTS is, in effect, held against appointments in their parent unit for the duration of their training (generally four years). As such, while participating on the TTS, personnel are unavailable to their units in a full time capacity but remain 'on the books' so effectively block a vacancy from being filled. The Commission notes that this particular issue has recently been reviewed by a civil-military team established on foot of the actions arising from Government's High Level Plan (2019) to

⁵⁵ The Military College comprises: The Command & Staff School; The Infantry School; The Cadet School; The UN Training School (Ireland); The Cavalry School; The Artillery School; The Military Administration School; and the DF Physical Education School. The Army Corps Technical Training Schools are also located in the Defence Forces Training Centre (DFTC) and include: The Communications & Information Services (CIS) School; The Ordnance School; The School of Military Engineering; The Military Police School; and the Transport and Vehicle Maintenance School.

⁵⁶ The Air Corps (AC) College comprises: The Flight (Pilot) Training School; The Technical (Apprentice) Training School; and The AC Military Training School.

⁵⁷ The Naval College comprises: The Naval Service (NS) Officer Training School; the NS Technical Training School and the NS Line Training School. All three NS Schools also have facilities located within the National Maritime College of Ireland as part of a unique civil-military, public-private academic partnership with Munster Technological University and Focus Education.

implement the Report of the PSpC. The Commission understands that, arising from this review, a number of options for addressing this particular issue are currently being examined.

The Commission recognises and welcomes how the Defence Forces continues to value and promote educational and training opportunities in support of the concept of 'life-long learning'. However, the Commission has a number of conclusions and recommendations to make in this area which it believes can have a positive impact and will support the development of new approaches to the Defence Forces' people as its key strategic resource.

Firstly, the Commission notes the severe strain that commuting is placing on all personnel and is satisfied that there are clear benefits to be gained from the increased use of distance and remote learning, and advocates greater use of ICT-based training and education, both in the home and from regional garrison locations or hot desks. The Commission strongly recommends that remote and distance learning solutions be developed and resourced sufficiently by the Defence Forces. Furthermore, in future, the locations of courses should be specified in periodic training directives with courses normally conducted at Defence Forces and formation level (generally in the Curragh, Dublin, Athlone, or Cork) being rotated where possible on a planned and regular basis to other regional locations. The aim should be to minimise how often, and for how long, personnel are required to travel significant distances, and to be away for extended periods. Moreover, all training should be modularised allowing personnel the flexibility to complete modules at a suitable pace having regard to their personal circumstances with the opportunity to return to complete the course in more than one sitting. This is particularly relevant for those with carer responsibilities, those that suffer injuries or those whose personal circumstances change during the course. This approach would also allow personnel on overseas service, at sea or on special leave, to avail of training and education opportunities if they wish and could reduce the length of long residential courses.

The Commission believes that conduct of NCO career education and training, such as the Senior NCO's course, should become more frequent and consistent. It should be no less frequent than exists for officers, which is currently not the case. Moreover, the emphasis placed on PDF officer career courses and professional military education needs to be extended to Reserve officers and NCOs. RDF training needs to be placed on a similar footing to PDF training with recognition for national educational frameworks and awards from external accredited bodies.

In line with its views on the need for genuinely merit based open promotion competitions, the Commission also believes that an objective selection process that is not based on seniority needs to be developed for career course selection. The necessity to undertake certain courses for career advancement, in both the officer and NCO ranks, needs to be examined in view of the multiple variety of career streams in the Defence Forces. Allied to this, the Commission has also concluded that career courses need to be developed specific to the needs of the single services at junior officer and junior NCO level, such as Land, Maritime and Air staff courses and service specific potential NCO courses. At senior level, both single service and joint courses should be established, as required. The allocation of places on joint courses needs to be reviewed as the current practices around allocation of places would appear to be disproportionately unfavourable to both the Air Corps and the Naval Service.

The Commission has identified a requirement for a permanent training establishment which should be in addition to the Defence Forces overall establishment. The size of this establishment should account for inductees, apprentices, those participating in the TTS, and officers and NCOs who are attending career courses. The Commission would stress, however, that this training establishment should not be seen as either a training cap, or a baseline, and the Chief of Defence and Service Chiefs may, at their discretion, in line with policy direction, increase or decrease the total numbers at any rank in training within the parameters of their wider establishment. In addition, the Commission recommends the opening of all apprentice and technical training schemes to the public in an effort to increase the recruiting pool. An appropriate balance needs to be struck between offering serving personnel technical training opportunities, ensuring a steady supply of talent and meeting ongoing outputs in operational units.

Finally, for reasons that will be addressed later in this chapter, gender and diversity training should be included in all inductee training and on all career courses for officer and enlisted ranks, while there should also be greater utilisation of training opportunities across the wider Public and Civil Service network.

8.1.6 Recommendations

The Commission recommends:

- **Implementation of a comprehensive approach to Strategic HR within the Defence Forces with, in particular, the following enablers put in place:**
 - o The establishment of a Strategic HR Change Leadership Team, to be led by the externally recruited Head of Transformation;
 - o The introduction of a talent management system and new career streams;
 - o The conduct of a comprehensive exercise that maps current patterns of career progression and develops a career progression route map for all roles, starting with entry level and those roles that are experiencing higher attrition rates; and
 - o All personnel should have a personal Continuous Professional Development plan and at least annual meetings with their commander to review their performance and competencies.
- **The development of an organisational leadership and development capability within the Defence Forces of the future to lead the transformation agenda.**
- **The creation of a permanent training establishment and provision of greater flexibility for managers, within the overall establishment number, to allocate staff across formations and ranks.**
- **Development and resourcing of remote and distance learning solutions to provide greater use of ICT-based training and education both in the home and from regional garrison locations or hot desks.**
- **The creation of a new enlisted rank of Lance Corporal in the Army and the Air Corps.**
- **The creation of a structure to provide a recognised career path for Naval divers that permits rank progression for enlisted personnel within the Naval Service Diving Section.**
- **Provision of a specialist Military Police career stream for all ranks, with adequate career progression opportunities.**

- **Re-development of promotion systems to ensure they are open, competitive and entirely merit-based, while the necessity for all officers and NCOs to undertake long career courses needs to be examined.**
- **That there should be objective, competitive selection processes designed for career course selection that recognise high performing individuals and avoids creating a 'box ticking' culture.**
- **That there should be equal emphasis and access to career training and professional military education for officers, NCOs and reservists.**
- **That service specific courses need to be introduced at a junior and senior level, with joint courses and training where required at a senior level.**
- **That a practice should be developed of actively managing the retention of valuable members of the Defence Forces who have decided that promotion is not for them, or whose career stream has a restricted rank structure.**

Chapter 8: People as the Defence Forces' Key Strategic Resource

Section 2

- ❖ Culture
- ❖ Morale
- ❖ Female participation
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Diversity
- ❖ Grievance Processes

8.2.1 Introduction

As previously stated, it has not been possible for the Commission to undertake a detailed review of all aspects of human resources, it has focused on the areas of most importance and of significant impact. As such, the Commission has prioritised issues on the basis of input received in the course of the visits made to military installations across the country, submissions received in response to the public consultation, the experience of the members of the Commission and the briefings and documentation secured by the Secretariat to support the Commission's work.

Separately, the Commission met with the Defence Forces' Women's Network, a representative group of female members of the Naval Service, female representatives of PDFORRA, female veterans of all ranks and with the Defence Forces LGBTQA Forum to hear their particular perspectives and experiences within the Defence Forces. Female members of the Reserve also provided their views during Commission visits to military installations.

As part of its work, a sub-group of the Commission also met with researchers from the University of Limerick (UL) who conducted Focus Group Research in 2016 into the findings of the 2015 Defence Forces' Climate Survey. The latter was commissioned on foot of a recommendation contained in the third and most recent Report (2014) of the Independent Monitoring Group (IMG) which was established to oversee the implementation of recommendations relating to harassment, bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment within the Defence Forces. The Commission has noted that the Climate Survey took place following very significant pay reductions and that public service pay agreements in recent years have unwound most of these cuts and, furthermore, have been weighted, to a significant extent, in favour of lower paid workers in the sector. The Commission has observed, however, that many major findings in the Climate Survey continue to be of relevance to personnel. Finally, it was noted that a repeat Climate Survey is overdue and that this type of staff engagement is conducted on a rolling, and even annual, basis in some armed forces. The Commission sees merit in a series of rolling surveys, similar to the UK Armed Forces Continuous Attitudes Survey, to track organisational progress and to inform management decision making.

8.2.2 Culture

Since its inception, the Defence Forces have faithfully sought to maintain a strong ethos and a set of values that have ensured a continuous and exemplary level of professionalism at

home and abroad. The ethos of volunteer service to the State and the six values of respect, loyalty, selflessness, physical courage, moral courage and integrity should form the bedrock of the organisation. It is important that members of the Defence Forces identify with the cultural values of the organisation because a positive culture cannot be maintained without employee support. In recognition of this, in 2017 the Chief of Staff inaugurated the annual Defence Forces' Values Awards which aim to recognise individual personnel who have demonstrated the organisation's values and, in doing so, act as an example to all personnel. The Values Awards initiative has been further reinforced by a Values in Action Strategy, which has been rolled out over the past 24 months and successfully led by senior enlisted personnel.

Over the course of its work, the Commission has observed a number of very positive aspects to the culture of the organisation. These include a high degree of commitment to serving Ireland and its people and that there is evidently a great enjoyment and motivation in the performance of military activities and living the 'life less ordinary' across the ranks of the Defence Forces.

While the Defence Forces has undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years to develop the culture of the organisation, it is nevertheless clear that there are elements of its culture that are a deterrent to the Defence Forces achieving its full potential. In brief, culture can be defined as 'how we do things around here' and, while manifestation of the culture in the Defence Forces is demonstrated ably by adherence to these values and the everyday professionalism and dedication to service to the State on the part of members of the Defence Forces, there is evidence of a culture that disadvantages, or in some cases damages, certain categories of people within the organisation, such as lower ranks, women, younger officers and specialists.

The Commission's extensive engagement, and independent research⁵⁸, suggests that the Defence Forces' organisational values are strongly cherished by individual members but not the lived experience of many serving personnel. A sentiment is evident that these values have been compromised by a feeling of disempowerment and a lack of agency at all levels. This is an area of concern to the Commission which has also been struck by a number of cultural traits that appear to be impeding the Defence Forces.

Firstly, and of particular concern to the Commission, is that there is evidently a culture across the Defence Forces which is masculine and has a limited appreciation of diversity of all kinds. There is a patriarchal approach that takes responsibility for lower ranks to the point of disabling them, and is resistant to females and so creates an uncomfortable place for them to work. This culture is grounded in long outdated social concepts, such as the male being the breadwinner in a family, a creation of male and female roles and linking salary to self-worth. It re-enforces practices such as the continued provision of segregated dining arrangements for officers and enlisted personnel, both at sea and on land, which has the added negative aspect of being costly and inefficient.

Secondly, while the Commission recognises that the Defence Forces are unique in some respects, it is acknowledged at senior levels of the organisation that it is not unique in relation

⁵⁸ UL Climate Survey and Focus Groups.

to matters of HR where, broadly, the issues, and solutions are no different to other areas of the public service. There is however some evidence of a belief across the Defence Forces as a whole that the organisation should not be bound by the same rules of other publicly funded organisations or comparable to any other areas of the public service and the Commission is satisfied that this belief is problematic and needs to change. Allied to this, the Commission has observed that there is a lower-than-expected sense of agency, which manifests as an expectation that others are to sort out the issues, allowing the Defence Forces to get on with military operations. This culture can express itself as a strong sense on the part of members of not being appreciated or understood. Many issues raised by personnel during the Commission's extensive range of visits to military installations revealed a range of what the Commission sees as non-strategic low-level irritants that should be entirely within the capacity of military management, in many cases local management, to resolve. Culturally, these are seen as the fault of someone else, or some other body, which can mitigate against the well-founded values of the Defence Forces being credibly put into practice. While Defence Forces' Leadership Doctrine places a significant value on leaders who manage and mitigate risk, an aversion to risk has been referred to as a further factor in the evident side-stepping of minor local irritants. There is an undue concern that higher-level approval, or cover, is required to guard against an outcome that may impinge future prospects given the heavy reliance on 'file review' as part of current promotion systems. The Commission believes that the culture of internalising grievances, and the belief in parts of the organisation that it is unique in all respects, is partly explained by the absence of a more open engagement by members of the Defence Forces, at all levels, with other public and private sector organisations. In this regard, while noting commendable initiatives and innovations undertaken, the view of the Commission is that the Defence Forces have not moved as quickly and as fully, as others have over the last 40 years or so, with developments and reforms across the wider public service towards enhanced people management, and adaptation of shared and common approaches where issues such as challenges in retention of specialist personnel, are common.

Thirdly, the Commission has noted concern within the Defence Forces about the organisation's continuing relevance which is evident from its strong focus on public relations as it delivers on its priorities. The Commission believes that this concern is a manifestation of the absence of a clear description of the Defence Forces' roles and value to the individual living in Ireland, the members of the Defence Forces and the political system. An enhanced and more strategic communications approach by the Defence Forces with the public could address this gap as it is apparent that too frequently Irish people are unaware of, and the Defence Forces fail to clearly articulate, what their primary roles and overall value to society are. Their role and value in defence of the State is frequently measured against the low level threat of an armed land invasion of the State and this often translates into a perception that there is nothing to defend against and therefore Ireland does not need to be ready to defend itself. The value of defence extends beyond providing security to a nation, offering benefits to both the economy and society in times of peace as well as conflict. To address this, the Commission recommends that, as a communication tool, a credible and convincing statement of the Defence Forces' vision of its role and value to the people of Ireland needs to be developed, and articulated from the perspectives of the individual living in Ireland, the members of the Defence Forces and the political system.

The Commission has also noted that independent research by the University of Limerick in 2016 and 2017 pointed to a concern amongst serving personnel that the positive aspects of the Defence Forces' culture were being eroded. They reported an organisation that was becoming increasingly individualistic and competitive with a perceived 'never say no' management culture in evidence, worsening work/life balance and a reduced emphasis on 'esprit de corps' and the unique elements of military life, such as physical training, sports and adventure training.

The Commission recommends that a fundamental cultural change process needs to be undertaken, using the most up-to-date approaches, and this should be an important part of the overall change process. The Commission considers that the vision for this process should be to build a much more modern, open and learning Defence Forces that responds to change quickly, and which better reflects Irish society today in its culture, values and symbols. This cultural change process is seen as being essential to the future success of the Defence Forces as it is key to enabling the level of remedial and transformational change that is required. Early implementation of high profile immediate impact changes that address some of the negative cultural traits identified above should be prioritised.

8.2.3 Morale

Morale is an important factor in the effectiveness of any organisation or group. A clear sense of common purpose and a strong commitment to delivery to that purpose, together with the means to deliver, are critical success factors in most human endeavour. Low morale is often associated with poor performance, except where there is an enforcing method that replaces positive morale.

In its engagement with Defence Forces personnel during visits to military installations, the Commission has observed that while members of the Defence Forces have a very strong commitment to the defence of this country, and see defence of the State and its people as their primary role, the articulation of this role is quite unclear and, as such, there is a notable sense among personnel that their contribution is in fact under appreciated. This has obvious implications for morale.

The Commission has also noted that some features of military culture appear to be feeding into lower morale. While the Commission recognises that the Defence Forces are rightly held in high regard in Ireland, and various barometers of public trust in institutions have, over the years, consistently placed the organisation to the forefront in this regard, there are credible indications of morale issues. One of the overarching causes of the low morale is, as outlined above, a lack of a clear basis for valuing the Defence Forces. Another overarching cause can be practices, which may appear on the surface to be minor, but which are needlessly rigid and archaic in practice. For example, a 'one-size-fits-all' management philosophy causes an unnecessary exclusionary approach within the Defence Forces, which is unhelpful and out-dated. There are various examples of this, including female members having to personally initiate and pursue the provision of breast-feeding facilities in their workplace, and the non-provision of suitable uniforms for female personnel.

8.2.4 Female participation

The Commission has noted that the recruitment of women into the Defence Forces has been a challenge with the percentage strength of total female personnel at 7.03% at the end of 2020. The following table shows the number of females in each service of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) between 2016 and 2020:

Table 8.1: Number of females in each PDF Service per year:

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Army	476	496	499	501	496
Air Corps	33	34	34	34	39
Naval Service	59	70	68	63	68
PDF Total Females	568	600	601	598	603

The table below shows the number of females in the Reserve Defence Force (RDF) over the same period:

Table 8.2: Number of females in each RDF service per year:

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Army	257	239	219	201	192
Naval Service	23	21	22	22	21
RDF Total Females	270	260	241	223	213

Over recent years, the Defence Forces have adopted a number of strategies to increase the level of female participation in the Defence Forces. For example:

- The Defence Forces Equality Policy was launched in 2016 and outlines the DF commitment to promoting equality in all aspects of its work, both at home and while deployed on overseas operations.
- Special consideration is paid to women as a target group for recruitment and within the general recruitment framework.
- The introduction of best practices in recruitment such as the adjustment of physical standards for female applicants and a balanced composition between men and women on recruitment and selection boards.
- A Gender, Equality and Diversity Officer has been appointed to promote gender equality policies and training within the Defence Forces.
- A Defence Forces Women's Network was established with the aim of increasing the participation of female personnel at all levels of the organisation. The aim of the Network is to allow women to identify any actual or perceived barriers to participation, which then feed into wider HR retention policies. In association with this objective is a White Paper Project survey aimed at identifying any impediments to the advancement of women within the organisation.

- Publication of the third Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions (2020-2024), sets out the Defence Forces commitment to implementing the aims of this landmark resolution in strengthening women's participation and protection in conflict settings.

The Commission has noted the intent of a project emanating from the 2015 White Paper on Defence to conduct a survey to identify impediments to the progression of women in the PDF which, following a delay caused by COVID-19, was launched in January 2021. While the outcome of the survey should inform proposals for additional initiatives, the Commission is disappointed to note that, despite the survey being issued through a number of channels to all serving female PDF personnel, a response rate of just 45% was achieved. Analysis of the data that was collected is still ongoing.

Overall, despite the various measures taken by the Defence Forces in an attempt to double the level of female participation, from a low base of 6% in 2016 to a target of 12% set in the Programme for a Partnership Government 2016, the Commission considers that the outcomes, in terms of increased female participation in the Defence Forces, are notably disappointing and that this points to an urgent requirement to take a more radical approach. The Commission believes this will need to focus on both increasing, considerably, current levels of female recruitment and putting in place new structures that will ensure that women are represented, continually, at senior officer and senior NCO ranks, in positions of decision-making authority, including at Defence Staff level. The Commission notes that innovative mechanisms to achieve this, with immediate effect, have been found elsewhere in the public sector where similar challenges were faced.

8.2.5 Gender

With such a low rate of female participation in the Defence Forces, the Commission's objective has been to make recommendations, based on an assessment of the current position and the future trajectory, to enhance the Defence Forces' capacity to attract, develop, and harness female talent. The Commission is also cognisant of the obligation to meet the requirements of equality legislation and standards of fairness. The target set by the UN is that the percentage of women serving both in missions and in headquarters will reach 25% by 2028, and 15% in deployed troop contingents.

Like the vast majority of militaries worldwide, the Defence Forces has traditionally been a very masculine, gendered organisation. Inevitably, this has negatively affected the organisation and runs contrary to a wide body of highly respected academic research and literature that demonstrates how gender diversity is important for organisations. While gender diversity delivers better outcomes in decisions, performance, and sustainability, the fact that the Defence Forces continues to draw from little more than 50% of the population is clearly a significant factor that is to the detriment of the organisation.

A common view in gendered organisations is that gender is simply about women. It is in the nature of such organisations that the gender structures are very powerful, but invisible to the dominant gender while being very visible to the minority gender. In addition to being gendered, it is also the case that many such organisations are also patriarchal. In Ireland, there are various examples of high profile gendered, patriarchal organisations, including the Civil

Service until relatively recently, the majority of political parties, and many bureaucracies which facilitate patriarchal structures. Such structures, where they exist, impact negatively on some women, children and also on younger men, and elements of this can be found in the Defence Forces making the organisation a very uncomfortable place for females, and lower status males or minorities to work.

Gender, and poor gender balance within the Defence Forces, were issues raised on a number of occasions, both in the submissions received on foot of the public consultation phase, and in multiple meetings the Commission held with Defence Forces' personnel across the country. Observations expressed to the Commission by serving female members provided a sense of a culture that scapegoats women with children. Comments made included a view that if a female member is pregnant, or has a child, "it's her that's causing the problem", that women have a fear of informing command authority if they are pregnant, and a perception that when women have children there is an expectation that they will soon be "bowing out". In this context, the lack of opportunities for personnel to take time out from their careers for parenting purposes, and to return without damaging future promotion opportunities, was noted by the Commission and is in marked contrast to developments in this regard in other sectors, including the Civil Service.

The Commission has reviewed various policies and approaches that have been pursued elsewhere which point to where progress has been made and which can aid the development of recommendations for change that would be specifically applicable to the Defence Forces.

The Commission feels strongly that a radical approach on female participation is now required and that, however genuinely well intentioned, the current rate of progress is quite inadequate, too piecemeal, and requires an urgent injection of pace. Furthermore, creating sporadic or apportioned opportunities for females, whether in senior decision making positions or ensuring places on courses, while important will not of themselves be sufficient, and that generation of a critical mass of female participation through a variety of interventions and supports within the Defence Forces is needed to effect real and lasting cultural change. Having regard to the fact that its research indicates that a threshold of 35% is necessary to overcome the negative effects of a lack of gender balance, and noting that the Government policy objective generally is to achieve 35% by 2025, the Commission feels that the Defence Forces should be set the objective of achieving at least 35% female participation across the organisation at all levels.

It is recommended that this should commence with short term time-bound targets for female recruitment and participation on career courses. In relation to the latter, a guaranteed minimum female participation rate of 35% on all command and other relevant career courses by 2025 is specifically recommended. In addition, sophisticated interventions will be required on the retention side to avoid disproportionate female turnover as it is apparent that highly trained staff are leaving the organisation due to the impossibility of combining the demands of the job with home life at certain points in their careers. While there have been a number of measures taken in recent years, such as the opportunity for two personnel to share a six-months overseas appointment, meaning a three-months stint away from home, and also a renewed focus on members whose spouse/partner is also in the Defence Forces but deployed away from home, it is clear that further focus is now needed, in consultation with staff, on

additional innovative measures. This will require concentrated support and commitment at the highest levels of the organisation and, to achieve this, the Commission recommends the appointment of a full-time senior rank position of Gender Advisor, with a dedicated staffing resource assigned to complement his/her work.

8.2.6 Diversity

The Commission is aware that a Defence Forces' Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Statement and Action Plan was launched in 2016 with the aim of ensuring that the Defence Forces is reflective of Irish society, and ensuring a leadership commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work as well as a respect for the Defence Forces ethos and values. An external review of the Plan was undertaken in 2020 which provided recommendations for the development of the Strategy. Throughout the lifetime of the Plan, the Defence Forces has engaged with certain initiatives with a view to increasing the diversity of its personnel. This has included a focus on diversity in communications which included several articles in Irish print media. Information on Defence Forces careers has previously been provided to cultural, religious, and ethnic groups throughout Ireland via the Irish Centre for Diversity, while schools from all areas continue to receive briefs on careers in the Defence Forces on an ongoing basis.

The Defence Forces LGBTQA Network 'Defend with Pride' was launched in October 2016 with the aim of providing support, information, and guidance for LGBT personnel and allies who wish to support colleagues, family, and friends. Since 2018, the Defence Forces have participated in the annual Dublin Pride parade along with other elements of the public service. The Commission met with the LGBTQA Network and received welcome and positive feedback in relation to the experience of its members, with evident strong support from senior leadership.

The efforts made by the Defence Forces to reflect the population that they serve is important as there is significant international research which demonstrates the value of diversity in good, effective decision-making and high performance. Despite a number of positive initiatives taken in recent years, the Commission is disappointed to note however that there is limited data available on the current diversity levels in the Defence Forces, other than on gender, and has been informed that no data is available or maintained in relation to ethnicity. Furthermore, there is currently no process for examining data trends for gender or ethnicity. The Commission feels that a profile of the current members of any organisation is required for modern HR practices, including to inform personnel policies in relation to recruitment and retention. The Commission recommends that, on a voluntary basis with appropriate respect and safeguards in line with GDPR obligations, the Defence Forces develop a profile of its current serving personnel which will include characteristics such as gender (including gender reassignment), race, sexual orientation and religious/non-religious beliefs, and this should extend also to include educational achievement, skills profile, experience developed and other key attributes. The Commission believes this is an essential starting point to underpin longer-term approaches to strategic HR and towards ensuring the Defence Forces become a modern military force that is reflective of the diversity of Irish society and with appropriate participation at all ranks, including the most senior ranks. This will need to be supported by investment in a new modern centralised HR ICT system that creates a complete single career record of all personnel, potentially aligned with systems used elsewhere in the public service,

providing a single and reliable repository of all personnel data. In a similar vein, and allied to the need for cultural change within the organisation, there should also be greater utilisation of training opportunities across the wider Public and Civil Service network in areas where challenges faced, and obligations on the Defence Forces, are not unique such as HR management.

While empirical data is limited, the Commission has nevertheless observed that the personnel make-up of the Defence Forces is not fully reflective of the diversity of the Ireland of 2021. This became very clear to the Commission on its many visits to military installations, and meetings with military personnel throughout the year.

A policy of harnessing diversity requires practical and effective action to bring it about as a cultural value, reflected in the profile of serving Defence Forces personnel, the culture or 'how we do things around here', and in the lived experiences of the members of the Defence Forces. A more determined effort should be made by the Defence Forces to recruit a more diverse workforce, both permanent and reserve, uniformed and civilian. Diverse not only in gender and ethnicity, but also in socio-economic, educational and geographical background.

Moreover, the Commission has also noted a number of examples of outdated practices which should be discontinued. These include, but are not limited to, the convening of a Roman Catholic mass associated with an induction ceremony; treatment of pregnancy/childbirth as an irregular absence from duty; and not permitting certain styles of facial hair, such as beards. These and all other exclusionary practices should be removed. In addition, the Defence Forces' Chaplaincy service needs to be adjusted in line with international best practice to better reflect the religious/non-religious affiliations of younger Irish people today.

The Commission recommends that the Defence Forces consults with communities of under-represented groups to discuss the attractions that service in the Defence Forces is considered to offer and to discover the barriers to attracting greater numbers of recruits to both the PDF and the RDF. Supports should also be put in place to enable the Defence Forces to become a more welcoming place for recruits from more diverse backgrounds and, as recognition of their commitment to this State, it is recommended that measures should be taken to enable easier access to Irish citizenship for those who serve in the Defence Forces.

Furthermore, the Commission recommends that gender, diversity and unconscious bias training should become mandatory across all ranks of the Defence Forces. Such training should be included in all inductee training and on all career courses for officer and enlisted personnel. Specifically tailored gender and diversity training should be conducted annually for strategic and operational leaders, and for specified office holders.

8.2.7 Grievance Processes

There are a number of layers to the various processes that are in place for members of the Defence Forces to have grievances addressed. These range from the Redress of Wrongs (RoW)

system, to the Ombudsman for the Defence Forces (ODF), Protected Disclosures and also the Conciliation and Arbitration (C&A) Scheme⁵⁹.

RoW is a statutory internal complaint and redress system that provides members of the Defence Forces, who consider themselves to have been wronged in any matter, with a mechanism to make a complaint and have it investigated and redressed. Following an investigation by a Military Investigating Officer, where the wrong is proven redress is offered to the complainant. The process also provides for complaints to be forwarded to the next higher authority and, if a satisfactory outcome has not been received in the complainant's view, the matter may be referred to the General Officer Commanding and potentially onwards up to the Chief of Staff for consideration. A complaint made under the RoW system that cannot be resolved internally to the complainant's satisfaction may then be sent to the ODF for independent investigation. In the case of serving members, the ODF may investigate the complaint if the matter is not likely to be resolved internally and 28 days has passed since the internal complaint was made. A serving member may also submit a complaint directly to the ODF, without recourse to the internal grievance mechanism. However, on review of the nature of the complaint, the ODF may recommend that the complainant pursue their complaint through the RoW system. A concern expressed in a number of submissions made to the Commission regarding the RoW system is the fact that it involves "officers investigating officers" and that this element needs to be modified. While noting that there is currently external independent oversight provided by the ODF, this could be addressed by the Defence Forces engaging a civilian complaints officer, or military investigating officers from outside of the chain of command.

The ODF provides both serving and former members of the Defence Forces with an impartial and independent review of their grievances and has full independence and autonomy in the discharge of his/her statutory functions. The ODF generally deals with appeals from personnel who have made complaints under the RoW system but are dissatisfied with the outcome. Following completion of an ODF investigation, a case report, which may include recommendation(s) that the ODF considers appropriate, is referred firstly to the Chief of Staff and then to the Minister for Defence for consideration and final decision. However, recommendations are not binding and the process provides an opportunity for the Minister to make his/her own recommendations also. The Commission has noted that in an Addendum to his 2019 Annual Report, the ODF raised the issue of the 12 month limitation period for complaints as outlined in Section 6(3) of the Ombudsman (Defence Forces) Act. This limits the ODF to investigating a complaint if the date of the alleged action, or the date that the complainant became aware of the alleged action, is within 12 months of the receipt of the complaint by the ODF. The ODF confirms that in the vast majority of cases no difficulty arises but, in a small number of cases, difficulties can and have arisen where the RoW process may on occasion take longer to conclude, for a range of understandable reasons. In such cases, the 12 month period may have elapsed before the case is referred to the ODF, with the result that he no longer has jurisdiction to investigate. Noting that the Minister for Defence has

⁵⁹ Over and above each of these pathways for personnel to have grievances heard and adjudicated on, the pursuit of litigation is a separate and distinct path open to any member to avail of their rights to litigate matters they feel are appropriate for formal litigation proceedings. Such proceedings may relate to an aspect of a grievance process they are pursuing, or following the conclusion of that process. Access and recourse to litigation cannot be fettered and the processes relating to that necessarily sit outside the formal processes themselves.

written to the ODF and proposed that an administrative solution be pursued, the Commission recommends that, where practicable, this should be implemented without delay to resolve this issue. The Commission has also noted the Ombudsman's recent statement to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Public Petitions⁶⁰ that he is precluded from investigating certain types of complaints including interpersonal complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. He also stated his belief that it would be beneficial to the Defence Forces personnel and the Defence Forces as a whole if he had the ability to launch proactive investigations on his own initiative. The Commission notes that, in other jurisdictions, self-initiated investigations can cover systemic administrative failures, command climate, culture, issues of low morale and general maladministration.

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 makes provision for the protection of persons from the taking of action against them in respect of the making of certain disclosures in the public interest and for connected purposes. The Act provides a number of processes whereby relevant information can be disclosed which came to the attention of a worker in connection with his/her employment and in the reasonable belief that the information demonstrates one or more relevant wrongdoings. The Defence Forces policy on protected disclosures is set out in General Routine Order 07/2015 which seeks to encourage and enable members of the Defence Forces to raise concerns rather than overlook them. Under this policy, a member of the Defence Forces making a disclosure that is protected under the Act, will be protected from penalisation or threat of less favourable treatment, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

In addition to these statutory processes, members of the Defence Forces have a range of parallel complaint and adjudication mechanisms to compensate for the limitations on their access to the full range of industrial relations machinery. This includes a C&A scheme agreed between the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, the Minister for Defence and the Representative Associations - PDFORRA and RACO. This provides a means for the determination of claims and proposals from the Associations relating to remuneration and conditions of service. Generally claims relate to pay and conditions, and award of allowances etc. When submitted, claims are the subject of negotiations and, where agreement is not reached, it is open to both sides to seek the assistance of an adjudicator or an Arbitration Board to settle the matter. Following an independent review in 2018, the parties subsequently agreed a revised scheme which implemented the recommendation that the Chairperson of Conciliation Council should be independent of the parties and identified by the Workplace Relations Commission. The Commission is satisfied that there is regular and ongoing communication between the official side and both PDFORRA and RACO and, while all parties to the agreement have accrued significant benefits from the scheme since its introduction, the lack of an adjudicator in place for a prolonged period has significantly weakened, and continues to weaken, the ability of the scheme to address issues of concern.

Of concern to the Commission is the fact that in the course of its work, and particularly during visits to military installations to meet with personnel of all ranks, members observed evidence of distrust amongst serving personnel around some important aspects of organisational justice generally. While processes such as RoW can, in the main, work efficiently, with

⁶⁰ https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/committee_on_public_petitions/2022-01-20/

improved case turnaround times being in evidence, there are nevertheless credible indications that the culture around such processes acts as a strong disincentive to engage. These can manifest as a fear or expectation of reprisal if grievances are aired, damage to future career progression within the organisation and individuals being marked as trouble makers.

These fears can be an even greater disincentive to air grievances if the complainant is part of a minority, particularly women in a very clearly male dominated environment. In this regard, observations expressed to the Commission, by female members, are that the complainant or victim is frequently portrayed as being “in the wrong”, that women in the Defence Forces are “being put up with”, and that gender is seen as a “women’s issue for women to sort out, not the organisation”. There is a concern that “lip-service” is paid to gender in the Defence Forces, with lots of policies but an absence of clear support and demonstrable commitment.

It is noted that the Commission’s concerns regarding the workplace culture and the complaints systems, policies and procedures have been echoed by personal experiences revealed by some members of the ‘Women of Honour’ group. The issues raised are of the utmost seriousness and the Commission welcomes the fact that a judge-lead Independent Review to examine issues relating to sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment and discrimination in the Defence Forces has now been established. The Commission does not wish to prejudge the work of the Independent Review. Nevertheless, it is clear to the Commission, taking account of its own findings and the experiences of some members of the ‘Women of Honour’ group during their service in the Defence Forces, that the culture that is pervading, and the application of current policies, systems and procedures in place for dealing with bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual assault, have not, and are not, serving all Defence Forces personnel well. The Commission welcomes the fact that the Independent Review will be undertaken by external and entirely independent and unbiased experts in this field.

8.2.8 Recommendations

The Commission recommends:

- **That a fundamental cultural change process, using the most up-to-date approaches, should be undertaken; and the Defence Forces should ensure early implementation of the following high profile immediate impact changes:**
 - Creation of a full-time senior rank position of Gender Advisor (OF-5) with a dedicated staffing resource and full time co-ordinators for staff networks such as the Women’s Network and the Defend with Pride group;
 - Creation of a mechanism to ensure there is female participation and input at all meetings at General Staff level (or the equivalent under the proposed new structures);
 - Full integration of all dining facilities, on land and at sea; and
 - Regular climate and continuous attitude surveys to assess morale, command climate and underlying culture on an ongoing basis.
- **Development of expanded recruitment channels with objectives set for the recruitment and participation of under-represented groups, through:**
 - Setting an overall female participation rate of 35% to be achieved through a combination of entry-level inductions (Cadet and General Service) and civilianisation,

- as well as direct entry into more senior, and specialist, positions across the organisation;
- Consultation with the communities of under-represented groups to discuss the attractions and barriers to service in the Defence Forces;
 - Adoption of measures to enable easier access to Irish citizenship for those who serve in the Defence Forces; and
 - Development of a profile of current serving personnel as an essential starting point to underpinning longer-term approaches to strategic HR and ensuring the Defence Forces is more reflective of the diversity of Irish society.
- **That consideration of the gender perspective should become mandatory in all aspects of decision making across the Defence Forces and particularly in relation to HR practices, promotion processes, procurement and development of infrastructure, including:**
 - Immediate removal of gendered rules, regulations and standards that are unfavourable to women, and others who do not fit a perceived 'norm', including a review and modernisation of grooming standards for both men and women in line with trends in other armed forces and Irish society;
 - A guaranteed minimum female participation rate of 35% on all command and other relevant career courses by 2025;
 - Identification and removal of practices around access to promotion opportunities and courses which, in effect, indirectly discriminate against women or other groups such as, for example, primary carers;
 - Fitness standards should be reviewed and updated to ensure they are relative to accepted standards for females and modern military roles;
 - Women in the Defence Forces should be supplied with and have ready access, without delay or special request, to clothing and equipment that are designed for females and, as such, are fit for purpose;
 - Immediate extension of the Defence Forces' Women's Network to include female members of the Reserve; and
 - Establishment of a female mentoring programme to allow women in the Defence Forces to benefit from the experience of identified role models and mentors.
 - **That gender, diversity and unconscious bias training should become mandatory across all ranks of the Defence Forces.**
 - **The development of a statement of the Defence Forces' vision of its role and value to the people of Ireland.**
 - **Implementation of an administrative solution without delay to enable the ODF to investigate complaints received more than 12 months after the date of the alleged action, or the date the complainant became aware of the alleged action.**

Chapter 8: People as the Defence Forces' Key Strategic Resource

Section 3

- ❖ Trends in numbers, including recruitment and retention
- ❖ Recruitment
- ❖ Family Friendly measures
- ❖ Working Time Directive
- ❖ Civilianisation
- ❖ Entry to Officer Ranks for Enlisted Personnel
- ❖ Healthcare
- ❖ Pensions and Contracts

8.3.1 Introduction

In setting out a strategic perspective on HR policies and strategies to fulfil the requirements of a more agile and adaptive Defence Forces, it was apparent that there are a range of specific areas of challenge that the Commission also needed to address. Some of these are outlined in this section of this chapter and a range of recommendations are made.

8.3.2 Trends in numbers, including recruitment and retention

The White Paper on Defence (2015) provides the policy basis for a Permanent Defence Force (PDF) full-strength establishment of at least 9,500 personnel. This strength ceiling was set in late 2011 as part of Budget 2012, having previously been reduced twice by Government during the financial crisis. By the end of 2011, the serving strength of the PDF was 9,438 personnel and was still relatively stable at 9,251 by the end of 2017. In the period since, however, the serving strength has fallen far more sharply and, by the end of 2020, had reduced to 8,649 personnel. Appendix 8 provides a Strength versus Establishment breakdown across all ranks as at the end of November 2021.

There are two dimensions to the fall in overall numbers; firstly, recruitment and, secondly, departures and turnover of personnel. In the case of the former, the Commission notes that 3,196 newly recruited personnel were inducted into the PDF over the five-year period from 2016 to 2020. However, over the same period, a total of 3,679 personnel departed. The Commission understands that the majority of personnel, over 75% according to the PSPC Report⁶¹, depart prior to their mandatory retirement age, and for a variety of reasons.

▪ Recruitment

In terms of recruitment, the Defence Forces recruit the vast majority of its members at entry-level ranks, either as enlisted apprentices, enlisted recruits, or officer cadets. In this context, the filling of vacancies at non-entry level ranks is largely done through promotion competitions. The nature of the roles assigned and operational context for the Defence Forces means that the Defence Forces also currently train, educate, and develop the majority of their personnel based on a training model of military first, specialist later. The Commission is aware

⁶¹ PSPC Report - Recruitment and Retention in the Permanent Defence Forces, May 2019, page 50.

that this differs from many public and private sector organisations where vacancies for differing grades can and are routinely filled from open market recruitment.

The Defence Forces also currently recruit personnel internally for specialist posts through advertisements for certain training courses. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Trainee Technician Scheme (TTS) is a four-year accredited scheme which trains personnel *ab initio* for a range of specialities in the Defence Forces. However, the placement of personnel on courses administered under the TTS reduces available personnel in line appointments. While the proposed creation of a separate training establishment should alleviate this to a significant extent, the scheme does nevertheless place a significant training overhead on the organisation. For this reason, higher levels of direct entry recruitment of specialists, across all roles in the Defence Forces, should be pursued. Currently, some specialist recruitment is carried out by the Defence Forces to fill a limited number of specialist positions, such as doctors, dentists, instrumentalists, engineers, engine room artificers for the Naval Service and grooms for the Army Equitation School. This form of entry has proven to be successful in attracting certain personnel, but notably less so for others. In this regard, the Commission notes that in the more recent past direct entry has been used in an attempt to fill a range of specialist positions in the Naval Service and, while there has been reasonable interest in the positions advertised, this has not ultimately resulted in inductions of the same level.

In order to improve the number of inductees, the Commission welcomes the fact that certain specialists can now start on a higher point of the incremental pay scale, where it can be demonstrated that their previous earnings were higher or at that level. While obviously limited by the range of a pay scale, and the requirement to operate within the parameters of public pay policy, the Commission believes that similar flexible approaches to pay will be essential to recruiting and retaining personnel with certain highly marketable specialist skills.

The Commission also welcomes the fact that the terms and conditions for certain direct entry officers have recently been revised to allow them to join at a higher rank. The Commission is also aware that following extensive discussions, terms and conditions for a direct entry scheme for former military pilots from other countries have been agreed. The Commission is very much in favour of this more dynamic approach as a means to quickly address skills deficits.

Moreover, the Commission recommends the expansion of schemes and opportunities for direct entry into the Defence Forces as a means of attracting individuals to specific career streams that they may find attractive. However, this will require changes to the current induction processes and consideration of issues such as whether all new personnel require the same fitness levels and, for the roles they will carry out, necessarily need to undergo military training of the same type and intensity. The training required to allow direct entry personnel successfully fill 'promotional' ranks would also need to be considered.

The Commission recommends increased use of direct entry recruitment to fill specialist posts with less stringent approaches to issues such as obligations to undertake full military training and achieve physical fitness levels that are non-essential for the role. Flexibility in relation to entry rank, and the starting point of the incremental pay scale will so be required.

▪ **Retention**

Given the nature of military service requirements, it is to be expected that higher levels of turnover will arise when compared to civilian organisations. As set out in Table 1 below, turnover levels over the past ten years (2011-2020) have averaged 7.3% but this is for all departures and, as such, it includes trainees. Significantly, as set out in Table 2 below, when trainees are excluded⁶², the average turnover rate, over the same ten-year period, falls to 6.2%.

Table 8.3: PDF strength, exits and rate of turnover (2011-20)

	Total PDF Strength	Total PDF Exits	Total % PDF Turnover
2011	9,438	692	7.33%
2012	9,359	803	8.58%
2013	9,318	473	5.08%
2014	9,355	481	5.14%
2015	9,194	571	6.21%
2016	9,200	679	7.38%
2017	9,251	742	8.02%
2018	9,056	740	8.17%
2019	8,755	882	10.07%
2020	8,649	636	7.35%
Average			7.34%

Table 8.4: PDF strength, exits and rate of turnover (2011-20) Excl. Trainees

	Total PDF Strength (Less Trainees)	Total PDF Exits (Less Trainees)	Total % PDF Turnover (Less Trainees)
2011	8,998	620	6.89%
2012	8,624	677	7.85%
2013	8,727	367	4.21%
2014	8,809	356	4.04%
2015	8,661	488	5.63%
2016	8,545	508	5.94%
2017	8,595	533	6.20%
2018	8,476	601	7.09%
2019	8,197	695	8.48%
2020	8,176	446	5.45%
Average			6.18%

Furthermore, the Commission has noted that, in its 2019 report, the Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) found that, since 2013 some 35% of annual attrition related to personnel in their first five years of service, with approximately 21% of new general service recruits

⁶² Cadets, 2* Privates, Apprentices and Recruits.

dropping out during the first year without completing training⁶³. The majority of personnel who depart in any given year are from the line stream; however, notably, as with many other areas of the public service, challenges arise, particularly during times of economic buoyancy, in relation to the retention of specialist personnel with scarce and highly marketable skills including pilots, air traffic control staff, and Naval Service technicians.

In this context, the Commission has also noted the findings of a Spending Review carried out by the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES)⁶⁴, published in October 2020 which, based on Central Statistics Office figures presented a comparative perspective of the dynamics of “job churn” and its components across the public service and in the Civil Service. Defence was identified as one of six sub-sectoral groups selected for in-depth analysis. [For the purposes of the Review, the Commission notes that Defence refers to both the Permanent Defence Force and the Department of Defence⁶⁵]. Analysis of the figures shows that Defence had the second smallest share of movement of workers throughout the period 2006-2018, with job churn rates well below those seen in most other sub-sectors. The Defence sub-sector had, along with Justice, the greatest share of staff who remained in their jobs and also had the smallest share of staff leaving their jobs throughout the period in question. Another notable trend was the clear pattern of staff leaving the Defence sub-sector to move to the private sector. Over the 12 year period, there were only three years, 2008-10, in which less than 70% of those who left the Defence sub-sector moved to the private sector.

The Commission is satisfied that, in broad terms, levels of average turnover are not out of line with other military organisations internationally, many of which would have higher levels and, in fact, would set as a desirable target the current turnover rates being experienced by the Defence Forces. This is particularly evident when ‘trainees’ are excluded from the PDF strength figure. The Commission believes that in line with what tends to happen in other workplaces, and also in line with its earlier proposal for the creation of a separate training establishment, trainees, as currently defined, and personnel in full-time education should be excluded when calculating overall strength figures.

The Commission also acknowledges, however, that there are different dimensions to any analysis of turnover levels. In this regard, in its 2019 Report⁶⁶ the PSPC observed that in the New Zealand (NZ) Defence Force attrition rates went from 8% in 2010, up to 21.3% in 2011 and back to 8% in 2015, while in 2017 attrition rates were near historically low levels. As such, fewer recruits were required and morale in the Force had bounced back following a major restructuring of the military in 2011. Attrition rates in 2017 were 8.9% in the NZ Army and NZ Navy and 6.8% in the NZ Air Force.

When comparing the level of the turnover in the Defence Forces to other armed forces, there are further dimensions such as the fact that overseas commitments are exceptional amongst comparable countries, current training infrastructure is not designed for high volumes of inductees, utilisation of reservists and civilian staff has been minimal, Strategic HR approaches and long term workforce planning are absent, and methods of entry to the organisation are

⁶³ PSPC Report - Recruitment and Retention in the Permanent Defence Forces, May 2019, page 48.

⁶⁴ Job Churn in the Public Sector: A trend analysis of the workforce dynamics during the years 2006-2018.

⁶⁵ In 2021, the Department of Defence advised the Commission that turnover in its civil branches is running at 20%.

⁶⁶ PSPC Report - Recruitment and Retention in the Permanent Defence Forces, May 2019, page 32.

limited. The Commission believes that all of these factors contribute to the sense of a retention crisis in the Defence Forces, despite what might be considered reasonable levels of turnover in other organisations.

Moreover, the Commission notes that while the ten-year average of 7.3% represents the PDF as a whole, the average turnover figure for the same period in respect of the Naval Service is notably higher at 9.7%. When trainees are excluded, the ten-year average figures for the Air Corps and the Naval Service are also higher than the overall PDF average (of 6.2%) at 7.8% and 8.4% respectively. These higher average levels of turnover in the Air Corps and the Naval Service are indicative of the fact that, in particular, there are irregular spikes and some drivers towards higher levels of exits in certain specialist areas of both services. These are also to be found in certain specialist areas of the Army where, likewise, specialist units can be vulnerable to gaps in strength and/or experience as, due to the skills required, vacancies cannot readily be filled by moving untrained personnel from other areas. As such, these personnel shortfalls result in greater pressure being placed on individual members and units, and this too can act as a push factor in terms of retention of specialist personnel.

There is evidence also that gaps in specialist areas can have a disproportionate impact on operations, particularly in the air and maritime domains, where deployability of aircraft and ships have been curtailed arising from critical shortfalls of personnel from specialist units, especially units that are smaller in nature and, as such, where there is less redundancy.

Without prejudice to the parameters of public pay policy, the Commission believes that in circumstances where remuneration is a significant contributory factor in above normal rates of turnover, there should be a mechanism to intervene in order to retain, and/or recruit, personnel numbers required to sustain critical operations. Such interventions could include accelerated career progression, accelerated incremental progression, and/or a responsive allowance regime. The Commission understands this approach has been applied from time to time in other areas of the public sector and within the parameters of public pay policy.

The Defence Forces have targeted a turnover rate of 5%. While there are some reasons why this might be desirable, such as the long-lead time involved in training specialists in skill sets that cannot be acquired externally, the Commission believes that this target is overly ambitious, is probably unachievable and, on balance, may not be in the best interests of the organisation. The unsustainability of this targeted low level of turnover is particularly evident in the context of the increasing proportion of personnel now drawn from the two latest generations of workers; millennials and generation Z (i.e. those born since 1981 and 1996). These generations are more transient and their broad career expectations tend to be quite different to previous generations. Many do not want, or place the same value on, a 'job for life' and will actively seek a minimum of three jobs during their working career. Reinforced by technological and societal shifts, this generation is expecting new ways of working and demands that their wellbeing is a high priority. The global pandemic has accelerated the move to new ways of working and this has implications for all employers as a fundamental shift in the expectations of workers is already underway. The Commission firmly believes this should be seen as an opportunity for the Defence Forces and not a problem.

8.3.3 Family Friendly measures

The Commission is aware of a range of ‘harmony’ measures have been implemented in recent years by the Defence Forces in an effort to address the need for new work-life balance initiatives, including minimising the impacts of travel away from home units/addresses. Family Friendly policies have been instituted in line with a focus on improving the work-life balance of serving personnel, including ‘hot desking’ (remote working) for certain enlisted and commissioned personnel who have been posted away from their home address, and remote access laptops provided for a limited number of personnel.

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, and as mentioned earlier in this chapter, a number of family friendly overseas appointments for commissioned and enlisted personnel were introduced where the normal six-month tour of duty could be ‘shared’ with another member of the Defence Forces resulting in a three-month deployment. There has also been a renewed focus on members whose spouse/partner is also in the Defence Forces and is deployed away from home.

The Commission believes that once existing restrictions pertaining to overseas deployments are lifted, there is scope to re-introduce family friendly shared overseas appointments. There should also be a renewed focus on members whose spouse/partner is deployed away from home whereby more flexible working arrangements may need to be facilitated and particularly so where there are caring responsibilities.

The Commission believes there is merit in reviewing the effectiveness of such arrangements in terms of the extent they are contributing to enhanced work-life balance but, clearly, further measures, some of which were introduced by necessity due to the sudden onset of COVID-19, should be taken. These include increased remote working and greater use of remote training and education, including in particular a revamp of traditional residential career courses with a view to minimising the non-essential residential aspects that are clearly non-family friendly and a detriment to participation for many members, and particularly for female members and primary carers. The Commission recommends that existing family friendly policies should be extended and enhanced to the greatest practicable extent, including for overseas postings, and should recognise the challenges faced by single parents and parents of children with disabilities, amongst others. The Commission welcomes the fact that one of the key facilitators of implementation of the recently launched Defence Forces’ Professional Military Education Strategy (2021-24) is improved capacity and access. Improved capacity is facilitated through learning means outside of formal structures, and can be further enhanced through modularisation of career courses and developing a blended learning approach to the delivery means.

Location uncertainty and the short notice periods often given for both routine domestic movements and routine overseas operational deployments was a constant criticism from instructor qualified NCOs, alongside junior and mid-career officers. These movements are within the control of military management and a coherent HR strategy and effective workforce planning would reduce the need for the majority of these short notice movements. A balance should be struck between the need for broad experience for the individual and organisational stability. In this regard, the Commission considers three year postings to be a

reasonable expectation for all staff with adequate notice provided for overseas missions and transfers.

8.3.4 Flexible Working Arrangements

Defence Forces personnel and management have long held a perception that their career requires '24/7' availability. The Commission believes that this notion is more closely aligned to the commitment required of service members, and is not the actual day-to-day pattern of work.

In modern society, there are now more single parent families or families where both parents work, an increase in the number of women in the workforce and an increase in the numbers of older and retired people who depend on family members for support. There is also a new generation of workers demanding greater workplace flexibility. In response to these changes, multiple international armed forces are moving towards a 'whole' or 'total' workforce concept in relation to their work force planning while both the public and private sector in Ireland have identified flexible working arrangements as a key factor in retaining a talented, productive and content workforce.

The Australian Defence Force in the aftermath of the Broderick Review into the treatment of women in the force became the earliest military adopters of flexible working arrangements on a large scale. A number of other countries including Germany, New Zealand, the UK, and the US and have now introduced flexible working arrangements to sustain their armed forces. These arrangements are being introduced to improve staff wellbeing, increase gender balance and to recruit and retain skilled individuals. These armed forces have allowed greater flexibility in their establishments, created floating posts, ensured seamless transfer between permanent and reserve service and removed barriers to re-entry.

Flexible working arrangements include both flexible service and flexible work practices and can include working other than full-time in an agreed pattern of service, job sharing, contracts allowing transfer between permanent and reserve service and remote working. Previous research in the Defence Forces and the Commission's extensive engagement with serving personnel found a significant appetite for these types of arrangements. The Defence Forces should adjust how it manages its core business, its time and its people due to the changing demographics of today's society. It is acknowledged that it has allowed some flexibility at a local level and have also introduced 'hot desking' on a limited basis. Flexible service arrangements should complement the flexible work practices already in place. Commanders would be required to manage their workforce to effectively align capability requirements with the needs of their members who serve on flexible work arrangements. This task is complex and requires flexibility in management; however, it promises to increase Defence capability through the retention of highly skilled and motivated people.

In the future, the Commission believes that it should become normal for personnel at all levels to access flexible work arrangements. Inevitably, some positions and skill sets will be easier to accommodate than others but services, formations and units should plan to accommodate these arrangements in the development of daily routines, training and exercise plans. Flexible service should be a strategic workforce option and needs to be supported at Defence Forces and service level to ensure that local commanders can balance operational outputs with their

staff needs. Commanders should consider flexible work arrangement applications with the expectation that they will find a way to accommodate and approve them and there should be no career disadvantage to personnel who access flexible work arrangements.

The introduction of such significant arrangements requires legislative changes and unqualified support from leaders at all levels in order to be successful and an iterative process of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

8.3.5 Working Time Directive

The EU Working Time Directive forms part of a package of measures originally commenced by the International Labour Organisation with the intention of bringing about an improvement in the health and safety of workers. The current version of the Directive came into force in 2003. Among its main provisions include a limit to weekly working hours whereby the average working time (including overtime) should not exceed 48 hours per week (calculated over a reference period), provision for daily and weekly rest periods during working hours, paid annual leave of at least four weeks per year, extra protection in case of night work where average working hours should not exceed eight hours per 24-hour period, and the right to free health assessments for night workers and, under certain circumstances, to transfer to day work.

The Commission notes that under certain circumstances, and also with due regard to the protection of the health and safety of workers, the Directive allows derogations from these rights and that it is not applicable where characteristics peculiar to certain specific public service activities, such as the armed forces, inevitably conflict with it.

The Directive was transposed into Irish Law by way of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 and, in accordance with the interpretation of the Directive at that time, as shared by other Member States, this excluded the Defence Forces (and An Garda Síochána) from its scope. The Commission understands that in 2008, the European Commission issued a draft report that referred to the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice which clarified that a broadly based 'blanket' exclusion for all the activities of the Defence Forces is not compatible with the Directive. However, certain activities can continue to be excluded based on an objective assessment of each.

In 2016 the Government approved a request by the then Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to draft heads of a Bill to amend the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997. The intention is to remove the blanket exclusion of An Garda Síochána and members of the Defence Forces and bring them within the scope of the Act, subject to the application of the derogations permitted by the Directive. The Commission is aware that the Department of Defence is continuing to engage with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, which now has lead responsibility for amending the legislation, to progress the necessary regulatory amendments.

The Commission believes that the nature of overseas service, including overseas trips or missions conducted by State ships and aircraft, precludes them from inclusion and justifies an exemption from the Directive. In certain circumstances training courses related to these activities, including IRL SOF selection and other courses of a robust nature, may also warrant

exemption. However, in line with best international practice identified in other armed forces and similar arrangements in An Garda Síochána, the Commission believes that all routine activities of the Defence Forces, both operational and non-operational, should be subject to the Directive. The Commission recommends that further exemptions from the Directive should only be granted for ‘exceptional’⁶⁷ or ‘extraordinary’⁶⁸ events. It is acknowledged that this is a significant piece of work and, in this context, the Commission is satisfied that while progress has been extremely slow to date, it is continuing to be made but should result in the expeditious removal of the blanket exclusion and the Defence Forces being brought within the parameters of the Act. The Commission believes that implementation of the Directive will improve retention, wellbeing and productivity in the Defence Forces.

From its extensive engagement, and previous UL research, the Commission notes the severe impact that increased frequency of duties and training requirements is having on all personnel. Wages and salary are the appropriate payment for regular hours worked and should be linked to an expected level of working hours.

Working hours exceeding the expected norm should receive adequate compensation and also be managed appropriately at an organisational, service and unit level. The rostering of staff for additional hours should be done in an effective and efficient manner and should not be on an indiscriminate basis. While remuneration in lieu of exceeding maximum working hours, or in lieu of compensatory rest, is not an option and would be inconsistent with the provisions of the Directive, its implementation should also be carried out in a way that disincentives use of ‘free labour’ i.e. the ability of management to roster personnel for additional working hours without cost. The Commission notes that a number of European armed forces have compensatory mechanisms that are compatible with military service in Ireland and in line with public sector pay policy. Appropriate methods for addressing hours worked in excess of expected norms are best negotiated between management and the representative associations.

In other parts of the economy, up to a certain grade or position of management authority, any additional labour sought should be delivered within a particular budget. As such, the personal time of employees is recognised, and is protected, by the existence of a cost factor. The Commission recommends the introduction of a (non-financial) ‘labour hours budget’ for managers would ensure that the time of Defence Forces personnel is managed appropriately and efficiently by Government, by service commanders, and by those assigning duties at a local level. It is imperative to remove the ‘free labour’ aspect of military life. As such, Defence Forces commanders and personnel with responsibility for assigning duties need to be held accountable for the working hours of staff.

Connected to this, the Commission also notes the requirement to develop and implement a system for recording time and attendance, to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Directive and, while cognisant of the complexity and challenges involved in doing so across such a disparate organisation, believes that measures to introduce such a system should be implemented without delay. As part of its deliberations, the Commission noted the absence

⁶⁷ Events that are inherently unpredictable.

⁶⁸ Events that, while predictable, are rare and impactful in scale and/or consequence.

of reliable data in relation to hours actually worked by Defence Forces personnel. This is an essential tool for both management and representative associations.

8.3.6 Civilianisation

There are currently over 450 civilian staff employed at various military installations to support the work of the Defence Forces. The vast majority are civilian employees but there is also a small, and increasing, number of Civil Servants being assigned to work directly for the Defence Forces in specialist areas such as procurement, finance and analysis, and further such recruitment is currently underway.

The majority of civilian employees are craft, general operative and related grades and are involved mainly in the maintenance of equipment and military installations. The remainder are mostly involved in clerical and storekeeping duties for the Defence Forces but also include aircraft inspectors, social workers and other various professional and technical grades, including a number of health professionals.

The Commission notes that the Defence Forces are out of line with international norms in relation to the number of civilian staff employed and where they are employed. An increased civilian staff work force will ensure that military personnel can devote greater periods of time to military training, operational tasks and areas where military expertise is required. Suitably qualified and trained civilian staff will not be subject to operational deployment, residential career courses, early retirement, medical or fitness testing and other elements associated with military careers and can thus provide commanders and managers at all levels with increased continuity and corporate knowledge.

Civilian staff could be utilised in the provision of a wide range of important administrative, professional, technical and industrial support services. As well as providing clerical support and financial management functions such as HR, IT and telecommunications, teaching, finance and procurement, internal audit, communications, research and analysis, accommodation, legal and health services.

During its visits to military installations around the country, the Commission noted that there was a positive response, at all levels, to the concept of the civilianisation of certain roles within the Defence Forces that are currently carried out by military personnel. Also noted is the fact that significant work has been undertaken on the civilianisation of certain roles within An Garda Síochána and this can provide a number of 'lessons learned' for any future work on the civilianisation of certain roles within the Defence Forces. Moreover, as a first step, the Commission considers that a review of existing posts and functions would need to be carried out to determine the optimum mix of civilians (whether civilian employees or Civil Servants) and military personnel required to address operational and support roles within the Defence Forces.

The Commission is conscious, however, that a fundamental shift in culture would be required for the Defence Forces to embrace the benefits which increased civilianisation can bring. These benefits include increasing the specialisation of certain roles, freeing up military personnel for military-specific roles, obtaining and retaining expertise and skills that would otherwise not be available to the Defence Forces, and facilitating greater diversity among

Defence Forces' personnel overall which the Commission feels can only benefit the organisation as a whole. Civilian staff should be supported in the future with adequate induction training, significant professional development and career development opportunities and ongoing familiarisation activities. An inclusive workplace culture needs to be developed for both civilian staff. Civilian appointments also provide a transition opportunity for service members at various stages of their careers. These opportunities may be of particular interest to service members who have developed specialist skills.

8.3.7 Entry to Officer Ranks for Enlisted Personnel

The Commission is aware that there are three methods for serving enlisted personnel to become a commissioned officer in the Defence Forces.

Firstly, there is an annual competition, with strict age limits, for cadetships within the Defence Forces which is open for all who meets the criteria to apply. The Cadet training required to become an officer in the Defence Forces depends on which service a Cadet enters, for example, a cadetship in the Army comprises 17 months training in the Military College, before being assigned to an operational role. Cadetships in the Air Corps and Naval Service have service specific training requirements but are of broadly similar duration. There are bonus marks available during the selection process for enlisted personnel who apply, which vary depending on rank and length of service.

Secondly, Commissioning from the Ranks (CFR) is another option, with fewer age restrictions, but the Commission notes that this happens only sporadically and is generally used for technical roles. Unlike a cadetship, training is shorter as there is limited level of conversion training required, which can be measured in weeks rather than months or years. The Commission notes this method of entry to officer rank also results in a limited career path post-commissioning.

Finally, Potential Officers Courses have also been conducted sporadically. There are age restrictions and these courses involve up to a year of training. Following completion of the course, those promoted enter the junior officer ranks, with the associated issues and concerns that currently exist around location uncertainty and career progression. The Commission has noted that while there has been a severe lack of Potential Officers Courses over the last two decades, with just three completed between 2000 and 2021, the current policy is to run these courses every three years, and the Commission understands that the Defence Forces are currently considering a proposal to run a course every second year. This is reason for encouragement and the Commission recommends that this proposal be implemented.

Data provided by the Defence Forces shows that, as of 31 May 2021, just 10.4% of all serving officers had prior enlisted service in the Defence Forces. The Commission has also noted that the spread of officers to have served in the enlisted ranks is heavily weighted towards the more junior officer ranks, with just one officer from the rank of Colonel or above (out of a total of 51) having had previous service in the enlisted ranks.

The Commission has studied international comparisons in relation to entry into the commissioned officer ranks. The Commission has noted that there are significant differences

in how some other militaries, such as those in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK progress such opportunities for serving enlisted personnel, including having increased age limits or offering different entry opportunities such as late entry courses. These militaries have up to 30% of personnel in their commissioned officer ranks with prior enlisted service.

It is clear that there is scope for significant improvement in the numbers of enlisted personnel progressing to the commissioned officer ranks. It is apparent that, currently, there is severely limited potential for enlisted personnel to progress their careers this way. Of the 10.4% of all serving officers with prior enlisted service, 35% were promoted via a Potential Officers Course (32%) or through CFR (just 3%), with the remaining 65% coming through the open Cadet competitions.

It is the view of the Commission that there is a significant value in retaining personnel with valuable prior training and experience in the Defence Forces as a whole, and especially from within specific specialist areas. Promoting greater numbers from the NCO ranks would enable the Defence Forces to address some of the current shortage of officers at management levels, would ensure experienced personnel stay with their specialist units, and would also have the knock-on benefit of creating greater career progression opportunities for NCOs. The Defence Forces needs to ensure that there is greater clarity and certainty around the provision of these courses and viable career progression opportunities for enlisted personnel. In this regard, the Defence Forces needs to raise awareness of the potential to move into the Commissioned ranks by including career progression lectures on all induction courses and holding annual information campaigns on the courses available.

The Commission recommends the establishment of an Officer Training Centre with two separate entities: The Cadet School, which would continue to train direct entry Cadets; and an Officer Candidate School, which would train reservists, civilians with professional qualifications, and also enlisted personnel, over short late entry commissioning courses and longer Potential Officer Courses. Furthermore, for experienced Senior NCOs seeking promotion, to ensure that their experience, expertise, and seniority are respected, the Commission recommends a new competitive late entry selection process and associated short commissioning course, of less than three months duration. In line with earlier recommendations for Command and Staff and Staff only career streams, late entry officers should be eligible for entry to senior officer promotion competitions once they are substantive in their new commissioned rank.

To provide certainty for career planning and opportunities for enlisted personnel to become commissioned officers, the Officer Candidate School should conduct Potential Officers Courses, Late Entry Officers Courses and Reserve Officers Courses at least every two years.

Furthermore, the Commission considers that a key enabler for increasing the flow of enlisted personnel into the commissioned officer ranks will be the establishment of a clear principle that no member can be disadvantaged in terms of their pay and/or pension arrangements arising from such career advancement.

8.3.8 Healthcare

The unique nature of military service requires fit and healthy personnel as a crucial component of military capability. Health and welfare enablers are key to the development and maintenance of this capability.

The primary role of the Defence Forces Health Services are to promote, protect, and restore the health of Defence Forces personnel, in order to maximise their fitness for their role, while maintaining an occupational focus and an operational edge.

The full range of health provisions are set out in Appendix 9. These include the provision of free primary and secondary medical care services for officers, free primary care and limited secondary care for enlisted personnel, occupational medicals, acute services, pharmacy, physiotherapy, mental health, and dentistry. In this regard, the Commission is aware that there is a two tier health system within the Defence Forces, with different levels applying to officers compared to enlisted personnel. The Commission strongly endorses the commitment made in the Programme for Government to ensure that the provision of private healthcare currently available to officers is to be extended to all enlisted personnel in the Defence Forces and welcomes that this issue is now being progressed by a joint civil-military working group established to examine the most effective means of service provision. The Commission recommends that this commitment is met in as timely a manner as possible.

While the primary goal in the provision of healthcare services is to maintain military capabilities, the Commission is of the view that, as outlined later in this chapter, when funded adequately and effectively delivered, these health services should form an attractive element of 'The Total Package' in terms of the employment offer and should be seen and marketed as an important recruitment and retention tool. The extension of private healthcare to all personnel should serve to underline this position.

Arising from a transformation process that started in the wake of an independent review and report in 2009 by PA Consulting into Defence Forces' medical services, there are a number of ongoing reviews of various healthcare provisions in the Defence Forces that need to be completed. The Commission recommends that these reviews be prioritised for action and completed within a 12-18 month period and the implementation processes started immediately.

The Commission's attention has also been drawn to the fact that the healthcare services and facilities in the Defence Forces are not subject to any form of external scrutiny. Oversight by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the designated statutory body tasked with ensuring that healthcare providers are meeting national standards, is limited to the services provided, or funded, by the HSE and does not extend to regulating or monitoring providers of private healthcare services. As the Defence Forces' healthcare services and facilities are funded through the Defence Vote, they fall outside HIQA's remit. The Commission questions, however, why publicly funded healthcare services, such as those provided by the Defence Forces, fall outside the remit of the designated statutory body tasked with ensuring national standards are being met. The Commission believes that HIQA's remit should be extended to the Defence Forces' medical services.

8.3.9 Pensions and Contracts

All members of the Permanent Defence Force automatically become members of a pension scheme. There are currently three pension schemes in operation, with membership determined by the date a member joined the public service. The main pension benefits received by members of all three schemes consist of two aspects; an annual pension and a tax-free lump sum gratuity⁶⁹. Members of these schemes who pay Class A (officers who joined after 6 April 1995) or Class H PRSI (enlisted personnel) are also entitled to claim the Contributory State Pension at the relevant age. Both the annual pension and the lump sum gratuity are, depending on the scheme, calculated by a combination of earnings (either final salary or career average earnings) and the length of service provided. A summary of the Defence Forces' pension regimes is provided in Appendix 10.

In the course of its visits to military installations, the attention of the Commission was consistently drawn to the disparities that exist between the three pension regimes and that, for many members of the current Public Service Single Pension Scheme (PSSPS), the terms act as a significant 'push factor' when determining their financial future with the issues centring on the terms and conditions of the employment contracts for enlisted personnel and on the pension entitlements for commissioned personnel.

The issue identified with the regulatory terms and conditions of employment for enlisted personnel was that a significant number of enlisted personnel, below the rank of Sergeant, were facing mandatory retirement from the Defence Forces at an early age following 21 years' service in December 2022. Clearly, a permanent solution to this looming threat needed to be put in place to allow these personnel to have certainty in their employment. The Commission welcomes the fact that in December 2021 an agreement was reached between the Departments of Defence and Public Expenditure and Reform to allow Privates and Corporals to remain in service up to 50 years of age, subject to meeting certain criteria including passing Defence Forces' medical and fitness tests, with arrangements to be finalised that will facilitate Sergeants to continue to serve beyond 50 years of age.

This change will provide such personnel with an opportunity to build a realistic 30+ year career in the Defence Forces and have the added benefit of maximising pension entitlements. Conscious of the objective of retaining a fit-for-purpose military force, the Commission endorses this objective and believes that it will also provide a motivation for personnel to remain in service as they will be entitled to their scheme pension benefits upon reaching the age of 50, or in the case of Sergeants the later age that is to be agreed.

The pension issue raised by the commissioned ranks relates to mandatory retirement ages for officers. Defence Forces personnel who joined from 2013 are members of the 'fast accrual' PSSPS and are entitled to their pension benefits if they retire after they reach the age of 50. Contracts for commissioned personnel set a mandatory retirement age of between 56 and 60, depending on rank. Therefore, those who reach the mandatory retirement age will be entitled to immediately draw down their scheme benefits. However, under the PSSPS, retired members of the Defence Forces will not receive their total pension benefits at that point as they will not be entitled to receive the Contributory State Pension until they reach the state

⁶⁹ In addition, there are also death benefits and ill health provisions. There are also spouses and children's pensions and all PDF personnel who joined after 1985 are automatically members of the spouses and children's pension scheme.

pension age. The Commission is aware that this is a concern to a significant number of members and echoes an issue that arose during the 1990s when new post-95 officer members, assigned as PRSI Class 'A', could not receive full pension entitlements for up to a decade after retirement. By agreement in 2009, a process for payment of a supplementary pension to bridge that gap was introduced but the Commission understands that this agreement, or similar, cannot be extended to members of the PSSPS as it would be incompatible with the terms of relevant legislation⁷⁰ that has wider application across the public sector. The matter was considered by the PSC in their review of recruitment and retention in the PDF and their recommendations included the need to consider options to tackle barriers to extended participation in the PDF, including the possibility of extending retirement ages. The Commission understands that a review has been conducted by civil and military personnel and is now the subject of ongoing discussions between the Departments of Defence and Public Expenditure and Reform. Following this, discussions will take place with the representative associations.

8.3.10 Recommendations

The Commission recommends:

- **Increased use of direct entry recruitment to fill specialist posts with appropriately adjusted training and physical fitness requirements.**
- **Urgent reform of existing working arrangements including:**
 - Any necessary legislative and organisational changes to allow for flexible service and flexible work practices;
 - Extension and enhancement of existing family friendly policies to the greatest practicable extent, including for overseas postings, and recognition of the challenges faced by single parents and parents of children with disabilities, amongst others; and
 - Introduction of a non-financial 'labour hours budget' for all managers.
- **The expeditious removal of the blanket exclusion of the Defence Forces from the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 subject to the application of the derogations permitted by the Working Time Directive.**
- **Establishment of an Officer Training Centre comprising the existing Cadet School and a new Officer Candidate School which would conduct Potential Officers Courses, Late Entry Officers Courses and Reserve Officers Courses every two years.**
- **Urgent reform of medical services within the Defence Forces to include:**
 - Implementation of measures to extend provision of private healthcare to all enlisted personnel in the Defence Forces;
 - Completion of all outstanding reviews into medical services within a 12-18 month period and the implementation processes started immediately; and
 - Extension of HIQA's remit to include the Defence Forces' medical services.

⁷⁰ Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012

Chapter 8: People as the Defence Forces' Key Strategic Resource

Section 4

- ❖ Visibility of “The Total Package”
- ❖ Pay Structures
- ❖ Pay Review and Pay Bargaining
- ❖ Pay Bargaining and ICTU

8.4.1 Introduction

The Commission has examined the evolution of all current remuneration systems and structures, and developments in this area are summarised in Appendix 11.

Some of the systems and structures that developed are further addressed in this section of this chapter in the context of considering whether they are optimal, particularly so in the context of the visibility of the total package which is important in the context of recruitment and retention challenges faced by the organisation.

8.4.2 Visibility of “The Total Package”

The overall remuneration package applicable to members of the PDF comprises a range of benefits, over and above the basic headline annual pay salary. Depending on their role and qualifications, personnel may be in receipt of a range of allowances and/or technical pay in addition to basic salary. Allowances play an important role in increasing the take home pay of Defence Forces personnel, and the Commission understands that allowances consistently accounted for circa 20% of the total expenditure on pay in the decade leading up to 2018⁷¹.

The current annualised levels of salaries of Defence Forces personnel and the range of allowances available are set out in Appendix 12. The Commission notes that some allowances are paid on a continuous basis (i.e. while the individual is performing the duties and in a post that attracts particular allowances) while other allowances are duty based and are paid on a per duty basis and as such may be paid a number of times during a year. Various types of allowances can be paid concurrently e.g. an individual could be in receipt of a combination of Military Service Allowance (MSA), Naval pay and Patrol Duty Allowance at the same time. The complexity of the current structures is heightened by the fact that some allowances are pensionable and/or taxable while others are neither.

In addition, enlisted personnel in a technical corps of the Army, Air Corps or Naval Service may also receive a specific technical allowance, known as ‘Tech Pay’, associated with their skillset. This is a weekly allowance, graded into six ‘bands’ based on the technical skills required for a post, and is paid in addition to basic pay and any other allowances that may be applicable.

⁷¹ Report of the Public Service Pay Commission on Recruitment and Retention in the Permanent Defence Forces, May 2019.

Moreover, officers in technical corps' receive a higher rate of pay than their line officer equivalents. These technical officers include those in specialist grades in medical, legal, ordnance and engineering areas. The starting salary for technical officers is approximately 18% to 20% higher than their line officer counterparts. However, significantly, such officers may have career path limitations imposed whereby, for example, the most senior technical officer post in the CIS Corps is at Lieutenant Colonel rank.

Apart from the range of allowances widely available, there are various other benefits accruing to members of the Defence Forces, including membership of the Public Service Single Occupational Scheme (providing for payment of an annual pension and lump sum gratuity upon reaching the qualifying age), overseas opportunities (including non-taxable allowances), health benefits (including in-house primary care facilities and reduced costs for secondary care if needed), and numerous paid education and training opportunities. A summary of these non-pay benefits is provided in Appendix 13.

The Commission has no brief to look at rates of pay and allowances. However, without making any comment on the adequacy of pay levels, it has observed that much of the commentary surrounding issues of pay in the Defence Forces does not seem to fully reflect the totality of the remuneration package, particularly so in the context of various allowances that are payable. The Commission believes that a more complete portrayal of the total package of attractive benefits to joining the Defence Forces needs to be better communicated and marketed as there has been a somewhat disproportionate emphasis on basic pay rates. Lack of awareness of the opportunities for personal development, and life-long education and training in particular, is seen by the Commission as a significant barrier to recruitment and efforts to access a wider talent pool. The Defence Forces offers career and personal development opportunities that most occupations cannot match. Where other employers of choice have notable employee benefits, many ensure these are marketed and highlighted as part of their recruitment campaigns. The Defence Forces should not be reluctant to consciously and positively point to the perks and benefits it can offer, and beyond those of basic pay and a life of adventure. Based on its review and assessment of the totality of the package, the Commission recommends that greater transparency of the wider benefits of membership of the Defence Forces is essential, and should become a central feature of future recruitment campaigns, which should be supported by external expertise.

The importance of allowances can be illustrated in an examination of the earnings of a newly appointed Able Seaman, also known as a Seaman First Class, in the Naval Service. Following training, he/she would start on an annual basic salary of €27,073. Furthermore, upon appointment as an Able Seaman, he/she would qualify to receive MSA of €2,659 per annum, rising to €7,380 by the end of their third year at that rank. As a member of the Naval Service, he/she would also be entitled to 'Naval Pay' allowance and, upon appointment to a vessel, to 'Patrol Duty' allowance (PDA). These allowances could add up to €1,128 and €9,847 per annum respectively (the PDA figure is based on a total of 165 patrol days on a vessel, in a year). This would allow the newly appointed Able Seaman to earn up to an additional €10,975 (gross) per annum. There are other allowances also available which from time to time may increase this further. When the combination of salary and allowances are taken into consideration, a recruit to the Naval Service may have a gross annual income of between €31,200 and €41,100 within four years of enlisting (depending on whether he/she is appointed to a vessel at the time).

8.4.3 Pay Structures

While rates of pay and allowances are outside of its remit, the Commission has carried out a review of the evolution of remuneration systems and, from its engagement with personnel of all ranks in various installations visited, a number of issues regarding current pay and allowance structures were identified. The Commission has reached conclusions in relation to a number of these but, in making recommendations, the Commission's focus is on enhancing the equity of existing structures, and not on determining actual rates of pay and allowances.

Chief among these are a number of anomalies in relation to the remuneration of personnel in their first three years in the rank of Private 3 Star/Able Seaman. Firstly, the Commission has noted that during this period a Private 3 Star/Able Seaman must 'mark time' whereby they do not progress along the incremental pay scale until they commence their fourth year of service. Secondly, a lower rate of MSA is applied for the first three years of service to personnel in the rank of Private 3 Star/Able Seaman. The anomalies in relation to this rank are unique across the public service. The requirement to 'mark time' for the first three years is understood to date back to a restructuring of the relevant pay scale in the early 1990's. Clearly, this anomaly is inequitable and acts as a disincentive to remain in service. In relation to the payment of a lower rate of MSA for the first three years of service, the Commission has been unable to establish why such a differential was established but it seemingly dates back to when MSA was introduced for enlisted personnel in 1979. Again, and in the absence of any rationale for paying a lower rate, the Commission sees this anomaly as inequitable and another disincentive to remain in service.

The Commission has noted that the Defence Forces faces a retention problem with recently enlisted Privates/Seamen and, with no clear rationale for continuing to offer anomalous terms to the remuneration of this key cohort of personnel, it seems counter-intuitive to continue such practices. As such, the Commission recommends abolition of the requirement for a 3 Star Private to 'mark time' for the first three years at that rank, and all personnel of such rank should be paid the applicable full rate of MSA.

In relation to MSA more generally, this is currently paid to all personnel, who have completed training, up to and including the rank of Colonel. Depending on rank, this can add between €5,233 and €7,857 to annual salaries (excluding the anomalous situation whereby a lower rate is currently paid to Privates 3 Star/Able Seamen personnel during their first three years in the rank). Noting that as far back as 1990, the Gleeson Commission considered MSA to be an integral part of salary, and regarded the combination of line pay and MSA as making up what would generally be regarded as standard pay, allied to the fact that it is both taxable and pensionable, the Commission recommends that MSA is formally integrated into the core pay of all personnel belonging to a rank that MSA is currently paid to. This recommendation is made in full light of the basis for which MSA was first introduced, in tandem with the Commission's earlier recommendation on the Working Time Directive, working hours, and compensatory mechanisms. As such, the Commission is clear that a decision on foot of its recommendation to integrate MSA into core pay does not and cannot create any scope for making a case for any new allowance, or additional recompense, for the present recognised special disadvantages associated with military life. The Commission believes that integration would considerably enhance the transparency of the total pay package to serving personnel,

and on offer to potential new entrants, and notes in particular that this structural change will come at no additional cost to the exchequer public pay bill.

During its review of pay structures, the Commission also noted that the salary scales for a number of officer ranks include two Long Service Increments (LSI). This extends the number of points available on the scale and can, for a period of time, result in an officer receiving a higher salary than a higher ranked officer. LSIs can have a positive effect on retention of long serving and experienced personnel but are not a feature of the pay scales of enlisted personnel. LSIs can be a useful means of acknowledging the contribution and high performance, in ways other than promotion, of personnel happy to remain at their existing level. The Commission notes that one of the actions arising out of the Government's High Level Plan (2019) to implement the 2019 Report of the Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) was to identify options for incentivised long service arrangements for certain officer and non-commissioned officer (NCO) ranks. The Commission understands that recommendations arising from this are to be considered in the context of the sectoral bargaining element of 'Building Momentum – the Public Service Agreement 2021-22'. Nevertheless, as a valuable retention aid, the Commission recommends the introduction of LSIs to enlisted ranks, including Private 3 Star/Able Seaman.

Another anomaly concerns the Sea-going Service Commitment Scheme introduced early in 2021 for Naval Service personnel. In this instance, direct entry personnel must wait three years to avail of the additional payment which can mean they work alongside, in demanding conditions, colleagues who are in receipt of the payment doing the same job and having similar levels of training and experience. The Commission recommends that immediate access to the Sea-going Service Commitment Scheme is provided to direct entry personnel in the Navy. In addition, overall arrangements for sea-going allowances should be reviewed and reformed. The current arrangements include a Sea-going Naval Personnel Tax Credit, a Sea-going Service Commitment Scheme and separate Patrol Duty and Naval Pay allowances. The Commission believes that these structures are overly complex and do not adequately incentivise and reward the hazardous nature and associated restrictions of serving at sea for prolonged periods. Similar duties in the Army requiring long periods away from home in restrictive and difficult working conditions are compensated in a different manner with the payment of consolidated daily allowances such as Overseas Peace Support allowance. A number of different payment structures are also evident in the wider public service to compensate for the arduous conditions at sea. The Commission recommends replacement of the existing arrangements with less complex sea-going duty measures that would underpin its recommendations for expanded recruitment as well as retention in the Navy.

The Commission notes that another action arising out of the Government's 2019 High Level Plan was a review of 'Tech Pay' arrangements for Groups 2 to 6, inclusive; arising from which two reports were completed and recommendations made to adjust Tech Pay arrangements for approximately 1,200 appointments. The Commission welcomes the fact that approval and sanction for implementation of these important changes was provided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in May 2021 and notes that discussions with PDFORRA on implementation are underway.

8.4.4 Pay Review and Pay Bargaining

The Commission has noted the commitment in the current Programme for Government, 'Our Shared Future', to establish a permanent pay review body, reflecting the unique nature of military service in the context of the public service. The Commission's Terms of Reference (TOR) state that the Minister for Defence will consult with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in this regard, following completion of the Commission's work. The Commission's TOR also note that all recommendations of a permanent pay review body must be consistent with national public sector wage policy.

While consideration of the merits or otherwise of establishing such a pay review body is outside of its remit, the Commission recommends the introduction of some form of mechanism, within the parameters of public pay policy, to review and make recommendations, on an ongoing basis, on the application of (existing) specialist pay rates and allowances to groups and categories of military personnel. This would be with a view to addressing the anomalies that, in a large organisation with such a variety of skilled personnel, will inevitably arise from time to time and also to address spasmodic market failures that can influence retention of highly skilled military personnel. Such a mechanism would contribute towards enabling retention of key personnel, such as those with highly marketable specialist skills being enticed to leave the Defence Forces by substantially higher remuneration packages, primarily in the private sector, causing an adverse impact on the Defence Forces' ability to sustain critical services.

The Commission notes that, in certain other parts of the public service, there are in existence regrading and job evaluation schemes that have been shown to operate successfully, on a managed basis, and in line with public pay policy parameters. Furthermore, the Commission's view is that the mechanism used to implement this recommendation should comprise members with backgrounds in military HR management, as well as members with expertise in public service pay policy.

8.4.5 Pay Bargaining and ICTU

As part of its review of the evolution of pay structures, the Commission has noted that legislation was introduced in 1990⁷² which provided for the establishment of representative associations for members of the Permanent Defence Force, up to and including the rank of Colonel, to represent members in relation to remuneration and related matters. Subsequently, PDFORRA and RACO were established.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) is the representative body for 44 affiliated unions and the largest civil society organisation on the island of Ireland. It represents approximately 90% of the State's public servants. With such a mandate it is inevitable that, for the purpose of concluding a collective agreement on pay and other conditions of employment, the bargaining process, and ultimately the agreement reached, is effectively between the Public Services Committee of ICTU and Government, as the public sector employer. In its submission to the Commission, ICTU expressed its view that members of the PDF should enjoy the same employment rights as every other worker in the country; that the representative organisations within the Defence Forces should be free to associate with ICTU and, through

⁷² The Defence (Amendment) Act 1990

its Public Services Committee, to fully participate in the established pay determination mechanisms in the public sector. ICTU also pointed out that it has amended its rules and constitution to provide a means through which the representative bodies could associate with it, while respecting the unique mandate of its membership. As such, the Commission understands that it is now open to PDFORRA and RACO to apply for associate membership of ICTU, which is short of full membership, but which would permit both organisations to actively participate in the work of ICTU's Public Services Committee.

While members of the Defence Forces are currently beneficiaries of the public sector pay determination process, they are in fact precluded from participating in it in any meaningful way as their representative bodies are not permitted to associate with or affiliate to ICTU. As such, the Commission believes that the representative associations are more spectators than participants in the process.

There are three broad approaches to this issue across Europe, from total prohibition on membership of military unions and associations, to state provision of legal mechanisms for the collective representation of military personnel, to restrictions on membership of associations that function independently of the state. In several states, military trade unions may be part of a federation of trade unions and the Commission understands that, despite concerns over potential external influence, the experience has generally been positive. The Commission also notes that in Austria, Finland, Germany, Malta, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden military personnel are permitted to join general trade unions/confederations.

Having considered this issue, and in consideration of the fact that it is inevitable that public service pay bargaining will continue to be conducted between Government representatives and ICTU's Public Services Committee, and noting also that a future permanent pay review body must operate within the confines of national public sector pay policy, the Commission recommends that the Defence Forces' representative associations should be facilitated if they wish to pursue associate membership of ICTU. Notwithstanding their relatively small size, the Commission believes this would enable the associations to be active and central participants in future public service pay bargaining processes, with their views and perspectives integrated into such processes. Furthermore, as another means of addressing an issue of concern to the Commission, an added benefit to association with ICTU would be the opportunity that would arise for the associations, and their membership, to observe and be more aware of the range of positive developments and new norms that occur across the wider public service.

Finally, while the Commission sees no reason, in principle, why full affiliation with ICTU could not be accommodated, it does recognise that there is greater complexity to taking this further step, mainly concerning the absolute requirement for the Defence Forces to fulfil its aid to the civil power and aid to the civil authority roles i.e. to step in, without question, when the civil authorities require support for whatever reason. Such issues would need to be fully resolved before full membership could be facilitated by Government. The Commission notes the possibility of aligning with provisions of existing Garda legislation concerning the offence of promoting industrial unrest.

8.4.6 Recommendations

The Commission recommends:

- **That greater transparency of the wider benefits of membership of the Defence Forces should become a central feature of future recruitment campaigns, which should be supported by external expertise.**
- **That the equity of existing pay and allowance structures be enhanced by:**
 - o Removing the requirement for a 3 Star Private/Able Seaman to 'mark time' for the first three years at that rank;
 - o Ensuring that all personnel of Private 3 Star/Able Seaman rank are paid the full rate of MSA applicable to the rank;
 - o Providing immediate access to the Sea-going Service Commitment Scheme to direct entry personnel in the Navy;
 - o Replacing the existing sea-going allowances with less complex sea-going duty measures; and
 - o Introducing Long Service Increments to the pay scales of all ranks of enlisted personnel.
- **On the basis that all personnel should, in the first instance, be paid the full rate of MSA applicable to their rank, MSA should be abolished and the full applicable rate integrated into core pay.**
- **The introduction of a mechanism to provide for ongoing review of the application of existing specialist pay rates and allowances to groups and categories of military personnel, and to make recommendations, within public pay policy parameters, where adjustments are required.**
- **That PDF Representative Associations should be facilitated if they wish to pursue associate membership of ICTU.**

Chapter 9: The Reserve Defence Force

9.1 Introduction

In its Terms of Reference, the Commission is tasked with considering the appropriate structure and size of the Reserve Defence Force (RDF) as part of a joint force approach across the various domains, and to consider options to better leverage the capabilities of the RDF in their supports to the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) and to make service in the RDF a more attractive option.

The Defence Acts (1954-2015) allow for the creation of multiple classes of reserves and, within the current RDF structure, there is a First Line Reserve (FLR), an Army Reserve (AR) and a Naval Service Reserve (NSR), but there is currently no Air Corps Reserve although the Commission understands that one previously existed. The White Paper on Defence 2015 states that the FLR is comprised of former members of the PDF who have undertaken, either voluntarily or on foot of a contractual commitment, to complete a period of service in the FLR while the AR and NSR are comprised of individuals, from a broad variety of backgrounds, who undertake Reserve training in their spare time.

While the FLR does not have a fixed establishment in terms of the numbers of reservists that it may comprise, its current strength is understood to be less than 290 personnel. However, the Commission is concerned that none of these members are operationally effective (active). In relation to the AR and the NSR, their current establishments are 3,869 and 200 respectively yet out of total establishment of 4,069 it is significantly understrength with a total current strength of just 1,622 members⁷³. However, the Commission is concerned to note that less than one-third of this strength are considered to be operationally effective (active), in the sense of being regularly in attendance for training and available for duties. Defence Forces internationally place a heavy reliance on their Reserve Forces and use them in all operations, nationally and internationally.

The regional structures and overall disposition of the RDF are outlined in Appendix 7.

From the Commission's engagement with RDF members and members of the PDF who work with the Reserve, it is apparent that the RDF is in an extremely weakened state. While Commission members were very impressed by the high quality and clear commitment of the RDF personnel that they met, it was also apparent that morale is at a very low ebb, with many dedicated members of the view that the RDF is being allowed to "die on its feet". Many firmly believe that both the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence are not willing to take the necessary urgent and corrective action to prevent the decline of the RDF. This belief is strengthened by the fact that, of the 13 projects related to the RDF arising out of the White Paper on Defence 2015, not one had been commenced when the Commission began its work in December 2020. As part of its work, the Commission received submissions from both the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence which stressed the importance of the RDF, and an apparent commitment to its revitalisation. Nevertheless, the Commission believes that the RDF's current status is quite unacceptable and is concerned about the extent of genuine

⁷³ As at 30 September 2021.

commitment to supporting and developing the RDF.

9.2 Roles and Purpose of the RDF

As outlined in Chapter 3, the roles of the RDF, as set out in the White Paper on Defence, are confined to augmenting the PDF in crisis situations and to contribute to State ceremonial events. The Commission considers that this narrow definition of the role of the RDF is of some significance and may be at the heart of the apparent inattention to its current decline.

Remaining conscious of how other countries utilise their reserve forces, the Commission sees no reason that the RDF should not be available routinely for a much wider range of taskings by unit commanders, if they are assessed by those commanders to have the necessary training and competence. Recent developments in relation to opening up the possibility of overseas service by members of the RDF are very welcome and represent an acknowledgement that the extant policy has necessarily begun to evolve since the White Paper in 2015. This can be seen as potentially a genuine first step in articulating a new and more substantial role for the RDF in supporting the PDF across the full range of its duties and tasks on overseas missions.

To instigate the necessary organisational culture will require a significant change in mind-set in the Defence Force at all levels of leadership. The role of the Chief of Defence (CHOD), and in particular the proposed new Service Chiefs, will be pivotal in demonstrating the PDF's commitment and resolve to successfully implement this organisational change, which should support the RDF in regenerating its effective strength across all ranks. In light of the current challenges facing the wider Defence Forces, the Commission recognises that operationalising this enhanced role for the RDF will require detailed planning, including reforms to the extant RDF force structure. As part of this process, the Commission deems it necessary that a progress report is submitted to the Minister of Defence within six months of the publication of this report.

Furthermore, this will require a clear Government commitment to appropriate funding to support an RDF regeneration process, and the Commission believes that the necessary measures should be in place by 2023.

Moreover, in order to provide the necessary flexibility to unit commanders, it will be necessary to ensure that the RDF budget is vested in the CHOD and delegated to the appropriate levels in all Services. The Commission considers that the current system which utilises 'mandays' for managing RDF personnel is unduly restrictive and should be replaced by a budgetary system which delegates responsibility to the Service Chiefs with the necessary flexibility to support unit commanders. In providing clarity on the use of 'mandays', there is also a need to address the classification of all RDF activity, including weekend training camps, range practices, training nights, and deployments in support of national resilience operations.

9.3 Structure of RDF

Under the Single Force Concept (SFC), the RDF is intended to be fully integrated with PDF units and this approach would appear to have widespread support from members of both the RDF and the PDF. However, during Commission visits to military installations, it was apparent that the SFC has not been fully inculcated within the Defence Forces, and in some cases there

have been inconsistencies in terms of how it is implemented at unit level. Practical examples were provided of how the SFC appears to be more successfully applied in the technical Army Corps' and in the Naval Service, rather than in the Army's Infantry Corps. The geographic dispersion of the latter may have been a particular challenge in this regard.

"The very idea of the continuation of the Reserve element must be looked at if there is not an investment in a major recruitment drive, and a clear mission statement with defined and actionable goals. Without this the Reserve will (and practically has in some barracks) cease to exist. This is because the RDF is not tasked with any duties by the PDF battalion structures in many barracks."

Public Submission

The Commission supports the SFC and believes that it provides an appropriate structural model, if properly understood and implemented. A clear definition of the SFC would be useful in this regard and the following formulation is proposed: "The 'Single Force Concept' is a series of policy, regulatory, training and operational initiatives that allow the Defence Forces to remain agile, flexible and adaptive in the delivery of effective and resilient military capabilities using an integrated mix of permanent, reserve and civilian personnel".

To operationalise this concept, it would be necessary to assign the CHOD and Service Chiefs, including subordinate unit commanders, the discretion to deploy PDF, RDF and indeed civilian staff as appropriate for any assigned task. The Commission firmly believes that key performance criteria should be identified and communicated openly, therefore providing a tangible mechanism for auditing the efficiency and effectiveness of the training and deployment of the RDF. By inculcating performance criteria, it will be possible to conduct timely analysis of the RDF, and to ensure that lessons learned are recorded and institutionalised. To ensure adequate accountability, there would also be merit in an annual report being prepared for the Minister in order to provide an overview of how the RDF is performing, and if it is meeting identified milestones as it regenerates.

Remaining cognisant of current challenges and internal organisational cultural barriers, the Commission believes that the RDF should be provided with a mechanism that avoids unnecessary bureaucracy, and provides the CHOD with immediate access to the RDF. While the SFC means that there is not, and should not be, a separate line of command for the RDF, the Commission is conscious of the evident need to support the RDF as it regenerates from its present very parlous condition. To facilitate this, and to ensure that appropriate priority is given to RDF matters, an Office of Reserve Affairs (ORA) should be created in the CHOD division at Defence Forces Headquarters. This Office would audit and oversee the recruitment and utilisation of the RDF at unit level and should bring any lessons arising to the attention of the CHOD, or other senior officers as appropriate. The ORA should be staffed with senior officers from all three services in the RDF, and include a PDF cohort to support the work of this office. The Commission recommends that the CHOD be supported by a Reserve Assistant Chief of Defence. The Commission also believes that the Reserve should be integrated at all levels of command and therefore that each Service Chief should have a Reserve Assistant Chief of Service of appropriate rank. In addition, all Senior Enlisted Advisors should also have a Reserve Assistant of similar rank. These reservists should act as the senior advisors on Reserve matters to their respective commanders and ensure that the Reserve is fully integrated at all levels of command and decision making.

In realising the ethos of the SFC, and to underline a new level of respect for the RDF, the Commission believes that there should be a harmonisation across the PDF and RDF of routine matters such as service dress, access to facilities (e.g. gyms), sharing of personal equipment and other appropriate matters. In particular, identification badges specific to the Reserve should be abolished. These measures should be built into the RDF regeneration plan.

The White Paper on Defence clearly articulates a desire from Government for greater recruitment and utilisation of specialists within the RDF. Currently, however, approximately 90% of the Army Reserve consists of Combat and Combat Support units. There are also issues with the geographic disposition of specialist units which are not aligned to major employment areas or academic centres producing the specialists they require. In addition, the Naval Service Reserve has no presence in areas with significant maritime activities and large coastal communities such as Galway, Louth, and the North West.

The geographical disposition of the Reserve provides the Defence Forces with an important connection to the community and in many parts of the country this is the only direct link with the military. A dispersed disposition has the benefit of providing a visible military presence across the country with possible recruiting benefits, enhanced public awareness of defence and security matters and the availability of local personnel to deal with a variety of emergencies from natural disasters to security incidents. The Commission supports a continued wide geographical disposition for the Army Reserve and an enhanced presence in coastal areas for the Naval Reserve with the creation of units in Galway, Louth and the Northwest. The future establishment should be reconfigured to reflect local demographics and the potential to recruit and fill vacancies. The Commission further recommends the establishment of Reserve sub units in areas of large population density where no units currently exist and that specialist units should be relocated or created in locations where they are likely to recruit the specialists required.

In relation to the Army Reserve, in light of its effective strength and the current threat assessment, the Commission recommends that the establishment remain unchanged but the composition should be more closely aligned to the routine operational needs of the PDF. In future, the Commission recommends a ratio of approximately 50:50 between Combat/Combat Support and Combat Service Support personnel. For the future Navy Reserve, a minimum establishment of 400 personnel is recommended and, for the Air Force Reserve, a minimum establishment of 200 personnel. This would be generally in accordance with relevant international comparators.

9.4 Staffing

During the course of its work, the Commission identified that the current very low strength level in the RDF is partially accounted for by a cumbersome and protracted recruitment process. Issues that have been highlighted include delays caused in processing security clearances, accessing medical assessments and lack of engagement with and feedback to potential applicants during what has become a long drawn out process. Additionally, the cut off ages for entry to the Reserve are lower than international comparators particularly in relation to former members of the permanent force and for those with specialist skills. These are organisation-imposed shortcomings and there is clearly a need to address these by introducing updated processes immediately.

“Due to the current critical lack of medical resources (facility for medical testing) in the Defence Forces, RDF applicants are regularly placed lowest in terms of prioritisation, which regularly results in waiting times in excess of 12 months for an RDF applicant to obtain a Defence Forces new entrant’s medical test. Therefore, unless a significant increase in the availability of Defence Forces medical resources can be effectively produced, an alternative/streamlined/practical form of acceptable medical testing must be implemented for RDF applicants.”

Public Submission

The Commission welcomes and supports the pilot project that is underway in the 1 Brigade region which is seeking to address these issues and to implement a maximum eight week recruitment process. The initial findings of this study are encouraging and suggest that simple initiatives such as local liaison, targeted advertising, outsourcing of medical assessments and consistent dedicated support from the PDF can have a significant impact on recruiting timelines and induction numbers. The report suggests that if these measures were replicated on a national basis the Army Reserve could regenerate close to its maximum establishment figure by the end of the decade. The Commission would caution

however that while recruitment initiatives are welcome and long overdue, these also need to be accompanied by measures to utilise and retain those reservists who have completed their induction training.

In relation to the FLR, the Commission has heard from experienced former members of the PDF, some of senior rank, who report a surprising lack of engagement with their expressions of interest, or applications, to join the FLR on leaving the PDF. The Commission has been puzzled as to why these applications are not being processed, and believe that this issue requires immediate resolution given the potential value such recently experienced PDF personnel, who are clearly keen to continue to serve, can contribute to revitalising the RDF. These FLR recruitment issues should be resolved relatively easily and can make a significant contribution to enhancing both the strength and expertise of the RDF.

“There should also be an emphasis placed on the recruitment of recently retired members of the PDF. Their experience and institutional knowledge is the product of considerable time, effort and cost, and should not be lost when they retire from the PDF. Effort should be placed on facilitating the enlistment of this cohort in into the RDF, by making it as easy as possible.”

Submission from a retired member of the Defence Forces

A more complex issue arises in relation to addressing civilian employment issues for reservists. This matter has been widely identified both as a factor in relation to recruitment to the RDF and the subsequent availability of RDF members for Defence Force duties. Many employers are enthusiastic about the involvement of their staff in the RDF because of the opportunities it gives for personal and professional skill development. However, reservists can face a challenge in balancing their careers and their service to the State and this issue may become more acute if the RDF targets recruitment on particular economic sectors in order to meet the high skill needs of a modern Reserve. Discussions with RDF personnel revealed the challenges many highly skilled technical staff have in balancing these competing demands. The Commission believes that potential solutions would best be identified in direct discussions with employer organisations and trade unions, and this may include providing legislative underpinning to protect reservist’s employment rights.

The Commission also believes that a range of proactive measures should be taken as part of a focused regeneration and recruitment campaign including:

- Targeting innovative recruitment efforts and unit establishment in locations with high concentrations of people in relevant age groups and/or with useful skills, including: third level colleges, hospitals, the silicon dock area of Dublin and the pharma industry in Cork.
- Engaging with sports clubs and other voluntary bodies, especially in areas challenged by poverty or isolation, to spread awareness of the benefits of joining the Reserve.
- Appointing prominent Reserve champions to support recruitment in the public sector and in the private sector.
- Targeting Reserve recruitment on social groups that are currently under-represented in the Defence Forces, including women and ethnic minorities. In addition to the benefit to the RDF, this may provide a platform for a more diverse recruitment to the PDF.
- Creating a simplified fast track recruitment system for members of the PDF who wish to join the FLR at the time of their discharge and on the recommendation of their commanding officer.
- Reintroducing the annual tax-free gratuity for members of the Reserve.

9.5 Capabilities

The Commission believes that the RDF can play an important role in providing additional capacity to assist the PDF in all of its assigned roles, and historically has done so with some distinction. More recently, the RDF have contributed to the national response in managing the Covid-19 pandemic, both in the Defence Forces' Joint Task Force, and where deployed nationally on Naval Service ships and at national testing centres.

A modern RDF, partly staffed through targeted recruitment of people with desirable expertise, could provide a valuable source of specialist skills to augment – but not replace – those recruited to, and developed by, the PDF. In delivering this enabling capability, some reorganisation of the current Reserve would be necessary, including by:

- Rebalancing the RDF towards a 50/50 ratio of combat / combat service and combat service support functions, with direct recruitment of appropriately skilled people to the latter;
- Creating specialist RDF posts / units in high-skilled units such as cyber, ordnance, intelligence and SOF, with both direct recruitment and targeted recruitment campaigns, in addition to filling these posts by transfers of existing staff;
- (Re) establishing the Air Corps Reserve (including FLR elements) as a matter of urgency with a particular focus on recruiting trained pilots, technicians and air traffic controllers.

The Commission understands that the Defence Acts (1954-2015) provide for direct entry commissions to the RDF for applicants with qualifications of particular relevance to the military. However, there has been limited use of this mechanism outside of the RDF Medical Corps, and no use of this process for inducting direct entry NCOs. Clearly, widening the method of entry, and level of entry, into the RDF would be beneficial in relation to critical skills such as in ICT, intelligence, logistics and other areas. Furthermore, a significant number of Irish

citizens, and those categorised as ‘new Irish’, may have completed military service with foreign armed forces and should be specifically targeted as part of future recruitment campaigns. Internationally, a number of armed forces offer ‘lateral entry’ mechanisms where prior military rank and training is recognised, and induction is tailored to the experience of the individual. This concept has already been accepted in principle by the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces in relation to the possible future recruitment of pilots, and in the Commission’s view could be more widely applied.

By looking after the Reserve by making it worthwhile and attractive for people to join in the first place, then more people from the Reserve tend to go on and join the regular Defence Forces. Public Submission

9.6 Recommendations

In framing its recommendations on the RDF, the Commission has not applied the three levels of ambition (LOA) approach in the same way as adopted elsewhere in this report. The RDF is at present in such a poor state that the Commission believes the more relevant options are quite stark: regeneration or abolition. The Commission firmly believes that the RDF can be revived and refocused in a way that will allow it to play an active and effective role in support of the PDF in all its functions, including in challenging new domains. The following recommendations are intended to provide a pathway to achieve this and are therefore included in the Commission’s overall presentation of the priority measures in LOA 2.

The Commission recommends that:

- **A new high level vision be articulated for the RDF that clarifies its core purpose as being to support the PDF in all its roles.**
- **Decisions to deploy RDF personnel should be taken by the unit commanders, and should not be limited by the overarching policy as at present.**
- **A detailed regeneration plan for the RDF, with clear and specific timelines, be developed and published by the end of 2022 setting out how a reformed RDF will be operationalised and funded.**
- **The CHOD be supported by a Reserve Assistant Chief of Defence and that each Service Chief should be supported by a Reserve Assistant Chief of Service.**
- **The establishment of the RDF should include, at a minimum, an Air Force Reserve of 200 and a Navy Reserve of 400.**
- **The Army Reserve establishment should stand at 3,900 with a ratio of 50:50 between Combat / Combat Support and Combat Service Support.**
- **A joint Office of Reserve Affairs (ORA), with senior staff from RDF and with support from the PDF, be established which should report regularly to the CHOD and senior commanders on all reserve matters. Command authority should remain with the integrated PDF/RDF unit commanders in conformity with the SFC but:**
 - o The deployment of RDF personnel should be audited annually and documented by the ORA, with appropriate and effective follow-up, including in commanders’ annual appraisals, to ensure best practice and accountability; and
 - o The ORA should provide an annual progress report to the Minister for Defence on the implementation of the RDF regeneration plan.
- **The role of reservists be highlighted and embedded in the curriculum of education courses for senior NCOs and officers.**

- **The Defence Forces should urgently develop revamped and efficient recruitment processes for the FLR, the Army Reserve, the Air Force Reserve and the Naval Reserve. For the Army, Air and Naval Reserves, a maximum recruitment time of eight weeks, from application to initiation, should be set and a fast track system should be developed for those who wish to join the FLR on discharge from the PDF.**
- **The Defence Forces should develop a clear and focused recruitment plan, with clearly identified milestones and annual reviews, targeted at meeting the full establishment of the RDF within eight years to include recruitment of specialists, Combat Support and Combat Service Support personnel. As part of its recruitment plan, the Defence Forces should:**
 - Ensure that the RDF fully reflects the diversity of contemporary Irish society;
 - Clarify the specific skillsets where targeted Reserve recruitment would be most likely to yield positive benefits and build the outcome into a sustained recruitment effort;
 - Provide for increased utilisation of direct entry commissions and direct entry at NCO level to the RDF, including an expanded use of direct entry mechanisms to all Services and Corps;
 - Create lateral entry mechanisms for those with prior foreign military experience who wish to join the RDF; and
 - Focus the recruitment plan around attracting highly skilled people to staff an expanded range of clearly defined non-combat and specialist functions, as well as general recruitment to conventional combat units
- **Employment protection legislation should be considered and discussed with employer representative bodies and Trade Unions to protect reservists and ensure their availability when needed.**

Chapter 10: Funding the Defence Forces of the future

10.1 Introduction

Defence funding is provided on an annual basis through two separate votes of expenditure Vote 35 (Army Pensions) and Vote 36 (Defence) in the annual government Estimates process. Together, these comprise the Defence Vote Group.

10.2 Vote 35: Army Pensions

The Army Pensions Vote provides for the payment of pension benefits to retired military personnel and certain dependants. As such, the Vote is primarily non-discretionary and demand driven. Superannuation benefits – retirement pensions and once-off lump sums – account for about 95% of all military pensions' expenditure. The balance is spent on military disability pensions and other ancillary benefits.

The following table summarises the position in relation to Vote 35 in 2020, 2021 and for 2022.

Table 10.1: Vote 35 Estimates and Outturn

Vote 35	2020 Estimate	2020 Outturn	2021 Estimate	2022 Estimate
Gross (€m)	259.2	251	262.7	270.7
A-in-As (€m)	5	5	5	5.0
Net (€m)	254.2	246	257.7	265.7

10.3 Vote 36: Defence

The main Defence Vote (Vote 36) provides for both capital and current expenditure and the 2022 gross allocation amounts to a total of c. €836m. A substantial portion of this allocation provides for the pay and allowances of some 9,500 PDF personnel, 550 civilian employees, and 355 Civil Servants. It also provides for paid training for members of the RDF.

The Vote also includes provision for non-pay costs relating to the replacement and maintenance of essential defence equipment, infrastructural and operational costs.

Table 2 below summarises the position in relation to Vote 36 in 2020, 2021 and for 2022.

Table 10.2: Vote 36 Estimates and Outturn

Vote 36	2020 Estimate	2020 Outturn	2021 Estimate	2022 Estimate
Gross (€m)	781.0	781.0	809.8	836.2
A-in-As (€m)	24.0	30.2	24.3	24.1
Net (€m)	757.0	750.8	785.5	812.1

10.4 Retention of Payroll savings

In recent years, the capital element of Vote 36 has been enhanced by the allocation of savings from elsewhere in the Vote, primarily from payroll savings arising from the PDF being below its authorised full strength of 9,500 personnel – for which it is fully funded each year. The ability to retain savings within the Vote, over a number of years, has made a very important contribution to the overall level of investment in equipment and barracks infrastructure.

The Commission notes that this is a quite unusual concession, which would not be the norm across other sectors, facilitated by agreement annually between the Department of Defence and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Demonstrating the importance of the payroll savings retention agreement, table 3 below shows increases in capital spending over recent years, with the overall spend achieved exceeding the allocation in each year from 2015 to 2020.

Table 10.3: Defence Capital Investment - Estimate Allocation v Outturn 2015-2020

Defence Capital Allocation & Outturn 2015-2020								
	2015 €m	2016 €m	2017 €m	2018 €m	2019 €m	2020 €m	Total €m	Average €m
Allocation in the Estimate	66.4	68.0	74.0	77.0	106.0	125.2	516.6	86.1
Outturn achieved	89.4	100.7	95.3	94.9	137.8	159.2	677.3	112.9

The Commission notes that while recruitment and other measures should continue to be pursued in an effort to return the PDF to full strength, the fact that savings in the Vote have been retained in full, with the agreement annually of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and invested elsewhere, has been crucial to the maintenance of certain capabilities.

Nevertheless, the Commission's view is that, ultimately, this approach is clearly unsustainable as pay savings simply cannot be relied upon, or expected, beyond the short-term. As such, the Commission believes that the case for a higher sustained level of increased capital investment, using the outturns achieved in recent years as a baseline, should be pursued over the medium term. In this regard, the Commission notes that this baseline level of capital investment derives from pursuit of the current level of ambition (LOA 1).

10.5 National Development Plan

When first published, the National Development Plan 2018-2027 had set out all Departmental Capital Allocations for the five year period 2018–2022 inclusive, with an original Defence provision of €541 million. Capital expenditure for the first three years 2018-2020 reached over €390 million (72% of the five year total).

This higher level of capital expenditure is reflected in the recently published revised National Development Plan, which provides a modest rate of increase in the Defence capital allocation which is now €566m. for the period 2022-2025.

The multi-annual capital programme, launched as Project Ireland 2040, increased the overall level of investment in Defence. As pointed out in the White Paper Update 2019, during the economic crisis, investment in Defence, as elsewhere, was significantly curtailed. However, the impact of this period of reduced investment allied to the relatively low absolute levels of investment, have tightly constrained the building of necessary capability.

However, of relevance to future funding of the defence capital programme, , the Government made an important policy commitment in the White Paper 2015 which provides that 100% of receipts from disposals of surplus properties from within the Defence estate are to be reinvested in the defence capital programme, with necessary adjustments made in financial provisions.

10.6 Comparative Data

From the outset, the Commission has been clear that levels of spend on defence in Ireland are markedly low against comparable international benchmarks.

The following tables provide data on levels of expenditure in recent years by Ireland and a selected group of comparable western and northern European countries. These countries were selected having regard to relative size, population, and broadly similar levels of economic prosperity. Five of the eight countries are members of NATO, while the remaining three are, like Ireland, NATO partner countries.

Table 4 below presents the military expenditure of Ireland and the selected comparator countries, as expressed as a percentage of each country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Table 10.4: Military Expenditure as a percentage of GDP

Military Expenditure as % of GDP – SIPRI⁷⁴						
Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ireland	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Ireland (% of GNI*)	0.55%	0.52%	0.50%	0.48%	0.48%	0.50%
<i>Selected Comparators - % of GDP</i>						
Austria	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%
Belgium	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%
Denmark	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%
Finland	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%
Netherlands	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%
Norway	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%	1.9%	1.9%
Portugal	1.8%	2.0%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	2.1%
Sweden	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%

In this table, the Commission also includes Ireland’s military expenditure as a percentage of the country’s ‘modified Gross National Income’ (known as GNI*). While GDP is the standard international measure of economic activity, for this country the figure can be skewed due to scale of operations of multi-national companies in the Irish economy. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) has therefore calculated GNI* as a better approximation of the size of the Irish economy, thus allowing for a better ‘ratio analysis’ for fiscal issues such as defence spending.

The above table also shows that the eight selected comparator countries spend an average of approximately 1.3% of GDP each year. In contrast, Ireland spends, on average, approximately 0.3% of GDP or, more appropriately for comparison purposes, approximately 0.51% of GNI* (average over the six year period 2015-2020). Based on these figures, Ireland must be considered an outlier compared to other western and northern European countries with similar sized populations and levels of economic prosperity. According to the latest available data from Eurostat, in 2019 Ireland had the lowest ratio of general government expenditure on defence to GDP across all EU Member States.

In table 5, below, the expenditure of Ireland and the eight comparator countries is reflected as a percentage of the total government expenditure in each country.

⁷⁴ SIPRI is the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament. <https://www.sipri.org/about>

Table 10.5: Military Expenditure as a percentage of Government Expenditure

Military Expenditure as % of Government Expenditure - SIPRI						
Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ireland	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.0%
<i>Selected Comparators</i>						
Austria	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%
Belgium	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%
Denmark	2.0%	2.2%	2.2%	2.5%	2.6%	2.5%
Finland	2.6%	2.6%	2.5%	2.6%	2.5%	2.6%
Netherlands	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%	2.9%	3.1%	2.9%
Norway	3.1%	3.2%	3.5%	3.5%	3.7%	3.5%
Portugal	3.7%	4.5%	3.7%	4.1%	4.2%	4.2%
Sweden	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%	2.3%	2.3%

This table points to a continuation of the pattern identified in Table 4. Over the chosen six year period, expenditure accounted for, on average, just under 1.2% of Irish Government expenditure. In contrast, for the eight comparator countries, their average expenditure accounted for some 2.6% of total government expenditure.

In Table 6, below, figures for military expenditure per head (in current US\$) are presented for the same group of countries. Once again Ireland appears as an outlier by a wide margin with much lower spending than the other countries.

Table 10.6: Military Expenditure per capita

Military Expenditure per capita* – SIPRI						
Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ireland	214.3	213.3	215.7	229.8	227.9	231.8
<i>Selected Comparators</i>						
Austria	307.1	329.9	357.5	381.0	361.6	399.9
Belgium	372.3	374.8	388.2	421.5	412.6	471.2
Denmark	591.4	629.1	656.6	792.5	789.5	855.2
Finland	620.2	621.2	622.5	680.3	656.1	737.7
Netherlands	511.7	536.8	562.9	651.5	701.9	734.1
Norway	1118.4	1142.2	1294.0	1412.7	1398.1	1312.0
Portugal	343.9	400.3	357.3	416.7	418.3	455.0
Sweden	551.7	551.8	558.0	574.9	581.8	639.0

*Figures in this table are in current US\$

Clearly, Ireland is spending considerably less on defence, in per capita terms, as a percentage of overall government expenditure and as a percentage of GDP/GNI, than any of the comparator countries selected. While the detailed figures in these tables are very striking, the overall picture of low spending on Defence in Ireland compared to our European neighbours is well known, both in Ireland and among our partner countries.

Table 7, below, compares equipment expenditure in Ireland and the comparator countries, as a percentage of each countries overall expenditure on defence.

Table 10.7: Equipment Expenditure as a percentage of overall Defence Expenditure

Equipment Expenditure as % of Defence Expenditure – NATO / Pfp						
Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ireland*	8.64%	9.79%	8.53%	9.39%	11.99%	14.41%
<i>Selected Comparators</i>						
Austria	**	8.6%	6.6%	6.2%	**	**
Belgium	3.44%	4.72%	6.52%	10.15%	11.06%	10.36% e
Denmark	11.50%	13.68%	10.39%	11.66%	18.06%	22.35% e
Finland	15.10%	14.83%	15.76%	17.18%	17.72%	19.32% e
Netherlands	11.16%	14.14%	14.75%	16.39%	23.90%	26.10% e
Norway	21.83%	23.37%	24.63%	25.60%	28.76%	28.83% e
Portugal	8.70%	9.95%	11.42%	15.48%	16.61%	17.19% e
Sweden	**	34.60%	21.70%	22.40%	26.40%	26.40%

* Information for Ireland is in line with NATO PARP and excludes Civil Defence and captures major equipment expenditure only. ** Figures were not available. e - Estimate

In this table, it is clear that Ireland significantly increased its expenditure on equipment as a percentage of total defence expenditure in the last two years. In real terms, this amounts to some €147.9m being spent on equipment during 2020 which, the Commission understands, was almost 40% more than was initially budgeted for such spending in 2020.

This notable increase in spending on equipment is a direct result of savings in the payroll budget being transferred to the non-pay capital budget. This is however based on the extant level of ambition (LOA 1) and, as such, the Commission believes that this figure should be viewed as a baseline for future expenditure on military equipment, regardless of any increases in personnel and payroll outturns.

10.7 Level of Ambition

As set out earlier in Chapters 5 and 6, the Commission has identified a need for clarification of our national level of ambition in relation to the core roles of the Defence Forces in order to guide its work and to identify the capability requirements depending on the Government's stated level of ambition.

As set out in Chapter 5, the Commission has found it useful to focus its work around three possible tiers of LOAs for the Defence Forces.

- **LOA 1 current capability:** Aiming to uphold sovereign rights and serving on peace support operations to the same extent as at present.
- **LOA 2 enhanced capabilities:** Building on current capabilities to address specific, priority gaps in our ability to deal with an assault on Irish sovereignty and to serve in higher intensity peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations overseas.
- **LOA 3 conventional capability:** Developing full spectrum defence capabilities to protect Ireland and its people to an extent comparable to similar sized countries in Europe.

The scale of funding required for each level of ambition is illustrated in table 8, below, on a single year basis by comparing the actual Outturn for 2020 (representing LOA 1) and an approximation for LOA 3 based on the 2020 average GDP % of comparator countries applied to Ireland’s estimated 2020 GNI*. The LOA 2 expenditure figure is an estimate of the medium term annual cost of this level of ambition based on the elements outlined in Chapters 6 and 9. It should be noted that this latter figure is a rough approximation to illustrate the scale of the funding commitment required and it has been calculated with the assistance of experts from the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces.

Table 10.8: Illustrative annual cost of three Levels of Ambition

Level of Ambition	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of GNI*
LOA 1*	€1,032m	0.50%
LOA 2	€1,500m	0.72%
LOA 3**	€2,967m	1.425%

* Based on 2020 gross outturn for Votes 35 and 36.

** Based on 2020 average GDP % of comparator countries applied to GNI* for Ireland.

Table 8 shows that for Ireland to approximate the level of commitment to defence of our comparator countries (i.e. LOA 3) would require a near trebling of our defence budget. Even to meet the modest, but urgently required, enhancements of our capabilities outlined in Chapter 6 would require a budget increase of approximately 50%. It must be emphasised that these figures reflect the level of ongoing annual expenditure that would be required for LOA 2 and LOA 3, and not a once-off level of spending. The very large budget increases required to meet LOA 2 and LOA 3 reflect the current exceptionally low level of current Defence expenditure as shown in Section 10.6.

Further detail on the calculation of the cost of LOA 2 is provided in Appendix 14. The figures set out there are approximate but reflect the findings in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 on the main capability enhancements (equipment, infrastructure and staffing) required as part of this level of ambition.

It should be noted that this includes a net increase in the Permanent Defence Force establishment⁷⁵, including civilian staff, of some 2,000 personnel⁷⁶, bringing the total to approximately 11,500 (in addition to the existing cohort of civilian employees), to provide for a range of recommendations made including double crewing of Naval ships, creation of a separate training establishment, providing camp staff in all main locations, increasing staff resources for a number of units and providing the resources required to undertake the necessary HR reforms. Ultimately, the additional numbers would be subject to detailed design, decision making and proactive management within a future Strategic HR culture, with prioritisation of staffing leading to reductions in some areas and additions to others, across the services, on the basis of the new detailed force design and savings from elimination of some ATCP and other taskings; for example security duties at Portlaoise Prison account for some 74,000 workdays annually.

10.8 Conclusions

The Commission acknowledges the great challenge faced in managing the public finances in the wake of the financial crash and more recently the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It recognises that budgetary policy must be framed within a prudent macro-economic framework and in the light of many competing demands.

The Commission also recognises, however, that it has previously been acknowledged by Government in its 2015 White Paper and its 2019 White Paper Update, that the demands on defence capability are becoming more sophisticated and dynamic while present funding levels only allow for major equipment platforms and infrastructure to be upgraded very sequentially, or over extended periods of acquisition.

The Commission has concluded that Ireland is clearly an outlier, compared to our peers in western and northern Europe, in relation to defence expenditure. This implies a very low level of ambition despite the threat landscape outlined in Chapter 2, the strong national policy commitment to overseas service and the multiple roles that the Defence Forces are expected to undertake as outlined in Chapter 3. The scale of the gap in level of ambition is clearly illustrated by the financial data in this chapter.

It is clear to the Commission that the current level of financial commitment (LOA 1) delivers military capabilities which are inadequate for the Defence of Ireland and its people from the threats identified in Chapter 2. Staying at this level will also severely constrain the capacity of the Defence Forces to maintain its overseas commitments and deliver required levels of aid to the civil power (ATCP) and aid to the civil authority (ATCA) supports. Providing a credible defence, on a par with comparator countries, would require a Government policy decision to move to LOA 3 with the appropriate budget as illustrated above. A Government decision to move to LOA 2 would address priority gaps in our current capabilities to defend Ireland's sovereign interests, serve on high intensity missions abroad and contribute to national resilience and security. However it would not deliver the capability required to develop full spectrum defence capabilities on a par with other sovereign European countries.

⁷⁵ The White Paper on Defence 2015 provides for a Permanent Defence Force establishment of at least 9,500 personnel.

⁷⁶ This is an estimation based on indicative figures provided by the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces for the purposes of calculating the approximate cost of a step up to LOA 2.

The considerations that arise in attempting to reconcile these national positions lie at the heart of Defence policy and are therefore beyond the Terms of Reference of the Commission. The Commission has adopted the framework of three tiers of level of ambition, as set out in Chapter 5, and elaborated in Chapter 6, to facilitate its own work and hopes that it may also act as a useful platform for discussion and decision by the Government and the Oireachtas on future defence policy objectives, level of ambition and defence funding. The Commission believes it is essential that the link between these three elements is acknowledged and maintained in all future policy discussion.

10.9 Recommendations

The Commission recommends:

- **That the Government and Oireachtas urgently address the need to define a clear level of ambition for the major roles of the Defence Forces: defence of the State, its people and its resources, overseas missions, ATCP and ATCA.**
- **That the chosen level of ambition be clearly and credibly linked to the budget provided annually and over the period to 2030.**
- **That the forthcoming cycle of Defence Reviews be based on a coherent and consistent approach to defence policy, level of ambition, required capability and budget.**
- **That consideration be given to a step up to LOA 2, as described in this report, in the short term pending the more detailed policy debate and decision required for higher levels of ambition.**

Chapter 11: Conclusion and Implementation

11.1 Conclusion

Should the Government decide to accept and implement the vision and recommendations proposed in this report it will result in the Defence Forces of 2030+ being a more modern, diverse organisation, with a coherent structure. Depending on the level of ambition chosen by Government, it will also have enhanced capabilities to defend the State and its people, serve on demanding overseas missions and support national resilience through its aid to the civil power (ATCP) and aid to the civil authority (ATCA) activities.

Most importantly, the Defence Forces will have its roles, level of ambition and budget clearly and consistently defined by Government.

On foot of this transformation:

- The Defence Forces of the future will have a capability development planning process that meets best contemporary standards and is based on the Government's stated level of ambition for all its defined roles.
- Defence Force structures will be lean and efficient and reflect the need to have clear lines of command, control and accountability.
- The Defence Forces' culture will reflect the diverse nature of modern Irish society, and embrace contemporary work practices that enhance the experience and performance of all personnel.
- All recruits, and those in mid-career will have visibility of the 'Total Package' of remuneration and employment conditions and will see the Defence Forces as an attractive career with a good and engaged employer.
- The Defence Forces will take ownership of internal issues and implement effective decision-making processes to provide timely interventions.
- Morale will be rejuvenated throughout the Defence Forces, underpinned by a transformational leadership style supported by proactive communication processes.
- The Reserve Defence Force will be revitalised to be a significant force enabler through the full implementation of the Single Force Concept.
- The importance of the Defence Forces across the full range of its roles will be clearly and strategically communicated to the people of Ireland and to our international partners.

This vision of future Defence structures, staffing and capabilities can only be achieved within a coherent and supportive policy framework. The White Paper 2015, the White Paper Update 2019 and the planned series of regular Defence Reviews provide a useful platform for the future development of Defence policy in the light of the current and future threat environment, and emerging trends at EU and UN level, as discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. However the Commission would strongly underline the need for a more extensive and well-grounded debate on Defence and security issues in this country. The need for our democratic political system to develop a clearly stated LOA for all roles of the Defence Forces, consistent with our stated national policy aims and directly linked to Defence budgets over the medium term, is a challenging but necessary step in this process.

The experience of the international members of the Commission provided a useful benchmark for its work and further highlighted the relevance of grounded debate in developing people's awareness and understanding of the role of the Defence Forces in protecting a country's values and interests, nationally and internationally.

11.2 Implementation

During the course of its work, the Commission encountered significant scepticism from military personnel, representative associations and concerned members of the public about the likelihood of the recommendations of this report being fully implemented. The history of previous reports, and of some of the White Paper 2015 projects, indicates that the required organisational change has not always been delivered, or has not been delivered with the necessary urgency.

Notwithstanding this, the Commission remains confident that the personnel it met, with their high-calibre qualities and their commitment to the Defence Forces, are capable of delivering the transformational change proposed in this report. To do so, they will require a clear mandate from Government supported by appropriate resources, some outside expertise and a strong, collegiate relationship with the Department of Defence.

The Department of Defence has a significant role to play in enabling, supporting and overseeing progress of the transformation agenda. To do this, it too must have the additional resources needed for a period of approximately five years.

In order to achieve this ambitious agenda, the Commission would highlight five core areas that must be addressed in a detailed implementation plan on foot of policy decisions in relation to level of ambition and budget:

- **Transformational change to modernise the Organisational Culture, its Human Resources Strategy** and practices, putting human resources – the Defence Forces' people – at the centre of the organisation, through re-engaging in a different way with its core values, renewing its 'contract' with its people with modern work practices, career management systems and transparent promotion systems based on merit.
- **Reform High-level Command and Control and creation of a Joint Strategic Headquarters** – requires the appointment of a Chief of Defence (CHOD), with full command and control of the Defence Forces, and commensurate accountability, supported by three Service Chiefs. Create a Joint Strategic Headquarters staffed by all services, including civilian experts, to support the Chief of Defence in delivering Defence Forces 2030+.
- **Revitalise the Reserve Defence Force** – to create a reserve force that can seamlessly train, operate and deploy with the Permanent Defence Force, nationally and internationally.
- **Reform and Restructure the Services** – to provide a modern Army, Navy and Air Force designed and structured to provide the future integrated force for national defence, overseas missions and ATCP/ATCA.
- **Joint Capability Development** – to support all Services in developing the joint future force, thereby providing Government with military force options at readiness for national and international operations.

Strategic communications will transcend the change and reform agenda, requiring the CHOD and key strategic leaders to communicate internally and externally, providing a catalyst for encouraging policy debate around issues pertaining to national defence and security.

Figure 11.1 – Core areas to be transformed in light of defined level of ambition and medium term budget



In delivering this ambitious agenda, the Commission believes that the success of the transformation will critically depend on the most senior leaders in the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence assuming full ownership and responsibility for the process, and personally driving change and reform. There is no substitute for direct top-level leadership of this process.

The leadership should be supported by a professional and highly-skilled transformation team, drawn from both internal and external sources, to undertake the detailed and painstaking organisation design and change management processes that will be required. Learning the lessons from previous organisation transformations in other Defence Forces and other public and private organisations will also be important. This team should be adequately resourced for the task and an appropriate budget provided for substantial expert external support, which the Commission believes will be crucial for the delivery of a successful transformation.

The Commission is aware that there is a parallel organisation review being undertaken in the Department of Defence. Consideration should be given to the appropriate interface between

any reforms that emerge from that process and the implementation of the Commission's report. There would seem to be an obvious and welcome opportunity to put the relationship between the two organisations on a new and better footing. In any case, and as noted in Chapter 7, implementation of the new high-level Command and Control structures proposed in this report, including the appointment of a CHOD, will necessitate a rethinking of the governance and accountability framework of the Defence Forces with the Minister and Department. The Commission also believes that, as part of the redesign process, the opportunity should be taken to explain the role of Accounting Officer and clarify the actual level of budgetary authority that is delegated to the CHOD.

The role of the representative associations will be important in supporting the implementation process, and this will require routine engagement as they could play a very constructive role in championing the reform agenda.

The Commission has identified 2025 as a reasonable target date for delivery of this transformation. This acknowledges that there will be legislative changes and budgetary decisions required to implement some of the recommendations. However, there are a number of critical recommendations that are key to delivering the initial momentum for success before 2025. The Commission believes that the following measures should be initiated at an early stage following Government decision on the recommendations in this report:

- Appointment of an implementation oversight group, with an independent chair, establishment of an Implementation Management Office and appointment of external change management support.
- External recruitment of a Head of Transformation and a Strategic HR Manager, and development of a new Strategic HR strategy.
- Creation of an Office of Reserve Affairs and development of a Reserve Revitalisation Plan.
- Creation of a Capability Development Unit (civil-military staff), adoption of a capability development plan, and implementation of a capability development process.

The Commission would also stress the urgency of the appointment of a CHOD and reform of the Defence Forces' high-level Command and Control structure, including the creation of Service Chiefs, and the creation of a genuinely joint Strategic Headquarters. As highlighted above, this will also involve redesigning the governance and oversight framework of the Minister and the Department of Defence. It is recognised that these changes will require legislative change to be fully implemented, however the Commission recommends that the possibility of proceeding with these changes on an ad hoc basis in advance of legislation should be explored with the Attorney General.

These measures would provide the necessary scaffolding for the rollout of a full implementation process and would indicate seriousness of intent to follow through on the full transformation process.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - Terms of Reference and Membership

Terms of Reference of the Commission on the Defence Forces

In addressing the detailed tasks as provided for in its Terms of Reference, the Commission will have regard to immediate requirements while also seeking to develop a longer term vision for beyond 2030. This is against a backdrop of the high-level Defence goal which is to provide for the military defence of the State, contribute to national and international peace and security and fulfil all other roles assigned by Government. This fits within the broader context of the protection of Ireland's defence and security interests nationally and internationally. The Commission's approach should aim to ensure that the Defence Forces will remain agile, flexible and adaptive in responding to dynamic changes in the security environment, including new and emerging threats (such as from climate change) and technologies.

It is understood that recommendations of the Commission may require legislative changes.

In arriving at its findings and recommendations for arrangements for the effective defence of the country, the Commission will have regard to the level of funding provided by Government for Defence.

The following Terms of Reference, and the Commission's overall approach will be guided and informed by both the White Paper on Defence 2015 and the White Paper Update 2019, which set out Ireland's extant Defence Policy, including the current Security Environment Assessment, as set out in the White Paper Update.

- The Commission will take account of Ireland's particular defence requirements, including its strong international commitment in the overseas domain as well as the particular roles of the Defence Forces in the domestic security environment which itself continues to evolve.
- The Commission will consider and recommend the appropriate structure and size of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) and the Reserve Defence Force (RDF). This will encompass consideration of appropriate capabilities, structures and staffing for the Army, and its brigade structure, the Air Corps and the Naval Service along with the appropriate balance and disposition of personnel and structures across a joint force approach in the land, air, maritime, cyber, intelligence and space domains.
- With regard to the RDF, the Commission will consider a wide range of options and will make recommendations to better leverage the capabilities of the RDF in their supports to the PDF and to make service in the RDF a more attractive option.
- The Commission will examine the structures in the Defence Forces as well as the work of the White Paper Command and Control project to date. In that context, the Commission will consider the most appropriate governance and effective high-level command and control structures in the Defence Forces.
- The Commission will examine the evolution of all remuneration systems and structures currently in place in the Defence Forces noting what the Programme for Government states in relation to a future Permanent Pay Review Body. Upon completion of the

Commission's work, the Minister for Defence will consult with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform on the establishment of a permanent pay review body, reflecting the unique nature of military service in the context of the public service. All recommendations by the Commission or the successor body and their implementation must be consistent with national public sector wage policy.

- The Commission will set out a strategic perspective on HR policies, and associated strategies, including grievance processes and consideration of appropriate structural flexibility, to fulfil the requirements of military capabilities for a more agile and adaptive Defence Forces in a manner congruent with modern society, and in light of the prevailing dynamics of the labour market, while consistent with public sector pay and personnel policy.
- The Commission will consider and recommend appropriate turnover and retention approaches, having regard to work undertaken to date, and international best practice, to deliver the capabilities required of a modern military force. In addition, it will recommend approaches to recruitment, including identifying military career options that could create a more diverse, gender-balanced, flexible and responsive force, with a system of career progression to meet the recommended force structures and disposition.

Membership of the Commission on the Defence Forces

Chair	-	Mr. Aidan O'Driscoll
	-	Mr. Peter Brazel *
	-	Admiral (Retd.) Haakon Bruun-Hanssen
	-	Mr. Shay Cody
	-	Professor Maura Conway
	-	Ms. Marie Cross
	-	Professor Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen **
	-	Lieutenant Colonel (Retd.) Dan Harvey
	-	Ms. Caitriona Heintz
	-	Mr. John Minihan
	-	Lieutenant General (Retd.) Conor O'Boyle
	-	Ms. Stephanie O'Donnell ***
	-	Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen
	-	Ms. Geraldine Tallon
	-	Dr. Gerry Waldron
	-	Ms. Jane Williams

* Mr. Brazel stepped down from the Commission in March 2021 for personal reasons.

** Professor Dalgaard-Nielsen stepped down from the Commission in May 2021 due to the extent of her employment obligations.

*** Ms. O'Donnell was appointed to replace Mr. Brazel in April 2021.

APPENDIX 2 - Report on the Commission’s Engagement and Consultation process

As outlined in the introduction to this report, from the outset of its work the Commission sought input from interested and informed organisations and individuals. This wide ranging consultation ensured that the Commission’s work captured the widest possible range of perspectives and allowed genuine, meaningful and balanced engagement to identify commonalities and trends to inform the Commission’s deliberations. The Commission gained invaluable first-hand insights into the key issues relevant to the future of the Defence Forces to 2030 and beyond.

This Appendix provides a detailed overview of all the engagements and public consultation undertaken during the work of the Commission. The Commission’s wide ranging programme of consultation was focussed on four areas:

1. Written submissions in response to the public consultation
2. Visits to military installations throughout the State
3. Meetings with stakeholders
4. A series of public webinars

1. Public Consultation - Written Submissions

An initial report on public consultation was published on the Commission’s website in August 2021. A copy of this report is attached at Annex A.

Written submissions were invited from individuals and organisations on issues relevant to the Commission’s detailed Terms of Reference, as assigned by Government when the Commission was established in December 2020. In total, 478 submissions were received from various sources which are categorised in the table below. Submissions were published on the Commission’s website www.codf.gov.ie/submissions

Source	#
Individuals (including Serving/Retired Members of the Defence Forces)	379
Business and Interest Groups	35
Political Parties and Public Representatives	31
Representative Association and Trade Unions	11
Government Departments & Agencies	13
Academics	9
TOTAL	478

A detailed analysis of the submissions received in response to the public consultation process was carried out to inform the Commission’s deliberations. Submissions were analysed using

a specialist software package⁷⁷ which delivered comprehensive evidence based insights and assisted the Commission in drawing out common themes and robust conclusions from the multitude of submissions. The submissions received have proved invaluable to members in the writing of the final report. They have helped members in their work by highlighting certain recurring issues, bringing awareness to specific areas and adding invaluable personal insight, particularly in the case of submissions from serving and retired members of the Defence Forces.

Key Themes

Written submissions were invited under the headings of structures, capabilities and staffing, as well as any other comments in relation to the Defence Forces having regard to the Commission's Terms of Reference, with some key themes emerging under these headings for the Commission's consideration as set out below.

❖ Structures

Submissions on Defence Forces' structures had a focus on the need to review current structures across the three traditional domains of land, sea and air, with many submissions suggesting the re-establishment of the 4th Western Brigade. Some recurring themes recommended for consideration in the context of Structures were as follows:

- ❖ High level Command and Control structure
- ❖ Army brigade structure including reinstatement of a third brigade
- ❖ Revision of Defence Forces Regulation C.S.4.
- ❖ Naval Service disposition
- ❖ Reserve Defence Forces structure & disposition
- ❖ Establishment of a Joint Force Headquarters

❖ Capabilities

Submissions on Defence Forces capabilities ranged across land, air, maritime, space, cyber and intelligence, and included material on domestic and overseas capability requirements, with a particular focus on equipment. Some frequent capability development recommendations were as follows:

- ❖ Naval Service fleet enhancement, including the procurement of a Multi Role Vessel
- ❖ Maritime Security capabilities
- ❖ Air defence and policing capabilities, including primary radar and Fast jet/Interceptor aircraft
- ❖ Strategic Airlift capability
- ❖ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) capabilities in land, air and maritime domains
- ❖ SAR capabilities
- ❖ Enhanced intelligence capabilities
- ❖ Specialist RDF (including Naval Service Reserve and Air Corps Reserve)
- ❖ Development of an effective cyber defence capability

⁷⁷ NVivo qualitative data analysis software package.

❖ Staffing

A striking number of submissions received were primarily concerned with staffing issues. The most frequently raised concerns in the context of Staffing were as follows

- ❖ Recruitment
- ❖ Retention
- ❖ Remuneration
- ❖ Revision of Defence Forces Regulation C.S.4. (also raised under Structures)
- ❖ Career Management and Progression
- ❖ Promotion Systems
- ❖ Service Contracts
- ❖ Housing & Accommodation

❖ General Issues

In response to the request for any other comments in relation to the Defence Forces having regard to the Commission's Terms of Reference, many general issues were raised both within and outside the Terms of Reference. Some of these issues are outlined below.

- ❖ Chief of Staff/CHOD as Accounting Officer for the Defence Forces
- ❖ DF representation and affiliation to trade union organisations
- ❖ The relationship between the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces
- ❖ Comparative Government spending on defence
- ❖ Ireland's strategic position in Europe and current and future threats.
- ❖ Ireland's policy of neutrality

2. Visits to Military Installations

The most important strand of the consultation and engagement process was the meetings with Defence Forces. The Commission met directly with over 1,100 Defence Forces staff of all ranks in their barracks and bases throughout the country, including members of the Reserve and some retired personnel. Commission members welcomed the very open, honest and informative engagement were struck by the calibre and commitment of our soldiers, sailors and air crew.

Remaining cognisant of national guidelines for social distancing and travel, the Commission managed to complete a highly intensive programme of visits to military installations across the country over the course of their deliberations. The purpose of these visits was for Commission members to listen to and engage with members of the Defence Forces across all ranks.

The Commission received briefing documentation in advance of each visit detailing the history of the installation, operational taskings, and the key challenges they face. Each visit provided the General Officer Commanding (GOC) / Commanding Officer, and their respective senior staff of officers and NCOs, with an opportunity to provide an outline of the roles and capabilities of the installation, and an overview of key issues based on staffing, structures and capabilities. The priority of each visit was to allow Commission members to spend time

meeting with personnel across all ranks and professions in order to understand the challenges and issues raised.

The meetings varied in size to facilitate various formats, which included large meetings in order to hear a broad range of views and to encourage a wide-ranging discussion among personnel. The Commission additionally used a more informal structure for smaller meetings, with Commission members engaging with personnel in groups of between three and six personnel, to promote more in-depth and personal discussions. Commission members received capability overviews at each location and visited accommodation and training facilities.

Barracks/Installations Visited

- ❖ Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin
- ❖ Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel, Dublin
- ❖ Defence Forces Training Centre, Curragh Camp, Kildare
- ❖ Haulbowline Naval Base, Cork
- ❖ Collins Barracks, Cork
- ❖ Custume Barracks, Athlone
- ❖ Finner Camp, Donegal
- ❖ Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick
- ❖ Aiken Barracks, Dundalk
- ❖ Dún Uí Mhaoilíosa (Renmore), Galway
- ❖ James Stephen's Barracks, Kilkenny
- ❖ McKee Barracks, Dublin
- ❖ Naval Ship LE W.B. Yeats, Dublin

Personnel Met⁷⁸

	Privates⁷⁹	NCO's	Officers	Total
Army	266 (4)	249 (21)	183 (13)	698 (38)
Naval Service	67 (2)	52 (4)	61 (3)	180 (9)
Air Corps	20	40	58	118
DFHQ	7	11	31	49
Retired Personnel	3	2	9	14
Civilian Staff	N/A	N/A	N/A	21
Totals (PDF+RDF)	369	379	358	1,106

Key Themes

Over the course of the visits the Commission noted that, although a number of location specific issues did arise, there were a number of common themes that emerged across many of the visits. The Commission's Terms of Reference were central to the discussions and personnel were asked to comment particularly on the themes set out in the TORs, i.e. structures, capabilities and staffing.

⁷⁸ RDF figures in brackets.

⁷⁹ Ratings/Trainees in the case of the Naval Service.

There were wide ranging discussions on these themes with a particular prevalence of issues under the staffing theme.

Structures

The majority of themes arising under structures related to command and control, the brigade structure and jointness. There were a wide variety of views expressed on the current brigade structure, with some pointing to the need for greater localisation of command and greater control over their own facilities and capabilities, while others favoured further centralisation of authority. The need for greater jointness was highlighted on a number of visits, particularly a perceived lack of jointness in DFHQ. There was a perception that the Naval Service and the Air Corps were isolated from the DFHQ. There were discussions on the need for greater integration of the Reserve Defence Force in order for them to appropriately support the Permanent Defence Forces.

Capabilities

Personnel provided detailed discussion around future capabilities. Naval personnel pointed to the need for modernisation of the naval fleet and inadequate air and sub-surface surveillance capabilities. The need for greater access to port facilities and greater parity in resourcing was also highlighted. Air Corps personnel highlighted the lack of investment in infrastructure and capabilities, such as tactical airlift and future rotary aircraft requirements. At many of the army installations frustrations regarding capabilities centred on the lack of organic lift capability and the need for sustained increases to the annual defence budget for capability development was noted. There were discussions regarding the need to develop specialist capabilities to support future operations. All services highlighted the urgent need for a modern capability process to be implemented across the Defence Forces.

Staffing

The majority of issues arising from the visits fell under the theme of staffing and retention issues. NCO promotion systems were a point of frustration for many personnel. There was discussions regarding the lack of spaces on training courses and the requirement to travel for long periods of time to complete career courses and routine duties. There was a strong focus on the need to move around frequently, which meant that there was a high staff turnover in many installations leading to a lack of continuity and unit cohesion. Personnel highlighted the need to modularise career courses or to make portions of them available remotely where possible. In particular, post-2013 personnel highlighted issues with the current pensions and contracts, many of whom believed that their contracts were less favourable and hindered them in long-term career planning. The lack of work-life balance was discussed, including the lack of family friendly policies and short notice periods for travel. There was also discussions regarding the need for gender mainstreaming.

Reserve Defence Force (RDF)

The Commission met with members of the Reserve Defence Force whenever possible. These representatives as well as members of the Permanent Defence Forces highlighted a number of issues in relation to the RDF. Many members of the Reserves did not feel they were taken seriously by the PDF and that the RDF has not been adequately integrated under the Single Force Concept. The lack of legislative support for reservists was discussed as reservists find it difficult to apply for time away from employment to take part in camps and trainings. The

need for an evaluation of the skills available in the RDF and for these skills to be better utilised was highlighted. There were also discussions regarding the inefficiencies in the recruitment process, which can take over two years, and is having a detrimental impact on the future viability of the RDF.

3. Engagement with Stakeholders and Experts

The Commission met with a range of stakeholders and subject matter experts from Ireland and overseas during its deliberations, including:

- An Garda Síochána
- Association of Retired Commission Officers (ARCO)
- Defence Forces' General Staff and Formation Commanders
- Defence Forces' LGBT Network
- Defence Forces Women's Network, and Naval Service Women's Network
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Defence
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Justice
- European Defence Agency (EDA)
- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- National Security Analysis Centre (NSAC)
- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)
- Office of Emergency Planning (OEP)
- Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann (ONE)
- Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD)
- Permanent Defence Forces Other Ranks Association (PDFORRA)
- Representative Association of Commissioned Officers (RACO)
- Reserve Defence Force Representative Association (RDFRA)
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA)
- United Nations (UN)

4. Webinars

The Commission held two academic-led webinars as a means to engage the academic community in the work of the Commission.

The webinars were jointly organised with the Royal Irish Academy's Standing Committee for International Affairs (SCIA) and the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA). The first of these webinars was held on 7 April 2021, and was divided into three panels comprising four panellists each including a Chair.

The composition of these panels is outlined below.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Panel 1
Small State Defence Policies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair: Dr Ken McDonagh, Dublin City University • Dr Björn von Sydow, Chairman of the Swedish Defence Commission • Prof Sven Biscop, Egmont Institute, Belgium |
| <p>Panel 2
Irish Defence Policy – Threats and Roles</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair: Andrew Cottey, Chair SCIA • Elisabeth Braw, American Enterprise Institute • Professor Paul Cornish Visiting Professor, LSE Ideas, London School of Economics • Dr Donna O’Shea, Munster Technological University |
| <p>Panel 3
Envisaging the Irish Defence Forces out to 2030 and beyond</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair: Clodagh Quain, Policy Analyst IIEA • Dr Brendan Flynn, NUI Galway • Dr Cornelia Baciou, University of Hamburg • Dr Ed Burke, University of Nottingham |

The second webinar was held on 7 September 2021 on the topic ‘The Future of Defence: 2030 and Beyond’. The panel was chaired by Prof. Ben Tonra from UCD, and the panellists included:

- Dr Raluca Csernatonu, Guest Professor at the Brussels School of Governance, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and Visiting Scholar at Carnegie Europe.
- Lieutenant General (Retd.) Tim Keating, Former Chief of New Zealand Defence Forces.
- Dr. Ulrike Franke, Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR).
- Professor Greg Kennedy, Professor of Strategic Foreign Policy, King’s College London (KCL).

Annex A



Coimisiún um Óglaigh na hÉireann
Commission on the Defence Forces

Commission on the Defence Forces Initial Report on Public Consultation August 2021

1. Background

The Commission's public consultation initiative was launched on our website (www.gov.ie/codf) on 22 January 2021. Submissions were invited from individuals and organisations on issues relevant to the Commission's detailed Terms of Reference, as assigned by Government when the Commission was established in December 2020.

In the context of the roles of the Defence Forces, as laid down by Government in the White Paper on Defence 2015, and the latest assessment of the security environment, drawn from the White Paper Update 2019, submissions were invited under any or all of the following headings, having regard to the Commission's Terms of Reference.

- 1. Capabilities**
- 2. Structures**
- 3. Staffing**
- 4. Any other comments in relation to the Defence Forces having regard to the Commission's Terms of Reference**

Submissions were invited from any interested parties by email or by post, and a response template was provided setting out the four headings, outlining that submissions could be as brief as desired but should not exceed 5,000 words in total. In order to assist the Commission in carrying out its work within the timeframe set down by Government, the initial closing date for receipt of submissions was 5 March 2021, but this was later extended to 19 March 2021

due to the significant level of interest and requests to have more time provided. A small number of submissions were received after the extended closing date and these have also been taken into account by the Commission.

2. Publication of Submissions

The publication of submissions on the Commission’s website has recently concluded. Initially, the Commission published submissions received from Government departments and agencies, representative associations and trade unions, political parties & public representatives, business and interest groups, and academics in late May. Submissions from individuals (including personal submissions from former and serving members of the Permanent Defence Force and the Reserve Defence Force) were published in August. All of these submissions are available on the Commission’s website by clicking the following link <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/0029c-public-consultation-commission-on-the-defence-forces/>

3. Sources of submissions

In total, 478 submissions were received from various sources which are categorised in the table below.

Source	#
Individuals (including Serving/Retired Members of the Defence Forces)	379
Business and Interest Groups	35
Political Parties and Public Representatives	31
Representative Association and Trade Unions	11
Government Departments & Agencies	13
Academics	9
<u>TOTAL</u>	478

4.2 Structures

The submission response template outlined that contributors might wish to consider: (1) the most effective high-level Command and Control (C2) structures within the Defence Forces to ensure an agile and balanced approach that can function across all domains at home and overseas; (2) appropriate future force structures for the Army (including its brigade structure), the Air Corps, and the Naval Service, individually as component services and collectively as part of an integrated joint force approach; and (3) the changing nature of reservists, which presents an opportunity for the Reserve Defence Force to further integrate and support the Permanent Defence Force through the provision of enhanced collective and specialist capability across all domains.

Submissions on Defence Forces structures had a focus on high level command and control structures including the need for a Chief of Defence and a Joint HQ, and on Army brigade structures including reinstatement of a 3rd brigade and the development of additional bases for the Naval Service and the Air Corps.

The word cloud below shows some of recurring themes in the submissions on this topic.

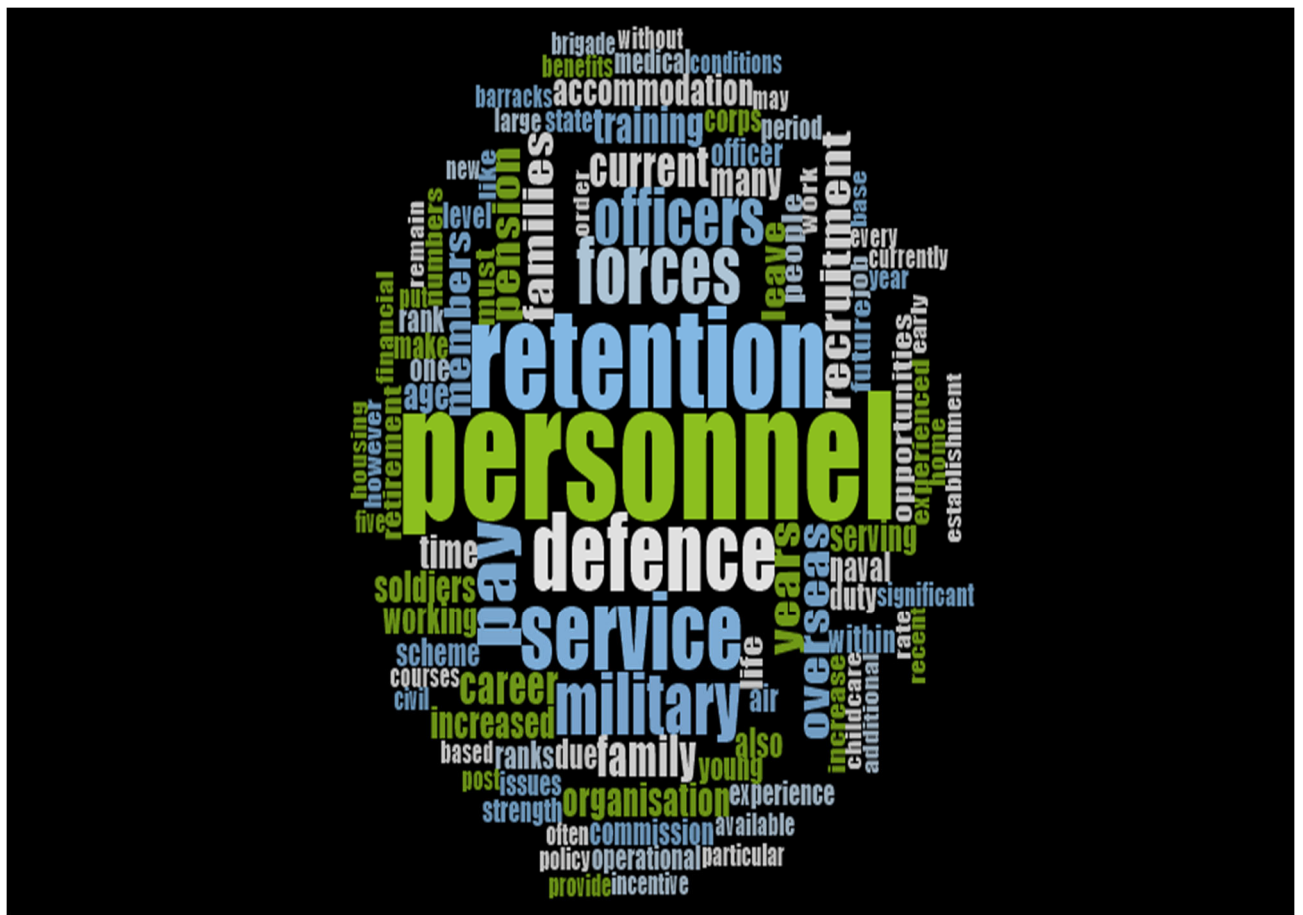


4.3 Staffing

The submission response template outlined that contributors might wish to consider the HR policies that support the requirement for an agile and adaptive modern military force, and additionally might wish to consider issues such as recruitment and retention, organisational culture and values, gender and diversity, career progression, and industrial relations machinery.

Many submissions had a very strong focus on Staffing, in particular submissions from serving and retired members of the Defence Forces. The key headline issue in this area was retention, which was linked to issues including promotions systems, career progression, pensions, allowances and employment contracts. Gender and diversity, family friendly issues and work life balance also featured highly, as did trade union affiliation.

The word cloud below shows the prevalence of issues mentioned within the submissions that focussed on Staffing.



4.4 Reserve Defence Force

The Commission's Terms of Reference provide that the Commission will consider a wide range of options and will make recommendations to better leverage the capabilities of the RDF in their supports to the PDF and to make service in the RDF a more attractive option.

The Reserve featured heavily across all the themes of capabilities, structures and staffing. Issues raised included the force structure and disposition, recruitment, remuneration, overseas service, training, and employment protection concerns. The role of the Naval Service Reserve, the establishment of an Air Corps Reserve and the introduction of a specialist reserve force were also mentioned in submissions.

The word cloud below illustrates some of the issues mentioned in relation to the Reserve Defence Force.



5. Overall Consultation Process

This report summarises the initial analysis of the submissions received in response to the public consultation and highlights some of the emerging topics. The submissions will continue to be rigorously analysed to inform the Commission's deliberations.

The submissions received form one strand of the consultation process. The other strands include a programme of visits by Commission members to all military installations in the State to meet with Defence Forces personnel of all ranks, including the Reserve - by the end of July the Commission will have visited 11 barracks and bases from Cork to Donegal, and these visits will continue over the coming months.

The Commission is also running a number of webinars in conjunction with the Royal Irish Academy and the Institute of International and European Affairs, and is engaging bilaterally with a range of national and international stakeholders.

6. Final report

It is intended that the Commission's report to Government on conclusion of its deliberations will include a detailed review on the entire consultation process.

APPENDIX 3 - Overview of the current Defence Forces

1.1 Defence Forces Organisation

The Defence Forces are organised on conventional military lines and consists of a Permanent Defence Force (PDF) and a Reserve Defence Force (RDF). The former is a standing force and provides the primary capabilities for military operations at home and multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations abroad. The RDF provides a contingent conventional military capability to augment and assist the PDF in situations where such additional capabilities are required.

In addition, some 451 civilian employees are engaged throughout the Defence Forces. The majority of these employees are craft, general operative and related grades and are involved mainly in the maintenance of equipment and military installations. The remaining employees are mostly involved in clerical and storekeeping duties for the Defence Forces but also include aircraft inspectors, social workers and other various professional and technical grades.

Permanent Defence Force

The PDF consists of the Army, the Air Corps and the Naval Service with an authorised strength of 9,500 personnel comprising 7,520 Army, 886 Air Corps and 1,094 Naval Service personnel.

The Defence Vote provides funding for a full complement of 9,500 personnel. The gap between authorised strength and actual strength differs across the Defence Forces and can differ within specialities across the Defence Forces.

The current strength of the PDF versus establishment is outlined at Appendix 8 to this report.

Army

The Army provides the land component of the State's Defence capabilities. The Army currently provides the deployable military capabilities for overseas peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations augmented by personnel from the Air Corps and Naval Service. On a day-to-day basis, the Army provides a broad range of operational outputs. These include activities in support of An Garda Síochána (known as aid to the civil power or ATCP) such as providing prisoner escorts, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and security duties at Shannon Airport. The Army also undertakes tasks in support of the civil authorities (known as aid to the civil authority or ATCA) such as the provision of assistance in severe weather events and is an integral part of the State's response to many contingencies. The Army is structured into two all-arms brigades, consisting of combat, combat support and combat service support elements. Each brigade has been designated a territorial area of responsibility with specific locations. From within the Army establishment, the Defence Forces Training Centre (DFTC), located at the Curragh, Co. Kildare, supports the entire Defence Forces.

Air Corps

The Air Corps is based at Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel, Dublin, and consists of an operational headquarters, two operational wings, two support wings, the Air Corps Training

College, and a Communication and Information Services Squadron. On a day-to-day basis, the Air Corps undertakes Army Support, Fishery Protection Patrols, and provides a Ministerial Air Transport Service (MATS).

On a 24/7 basis, the Air Corps supports An Garda Síochána by providing pilots and technical support for the Garda Air Support Unit (GASU). The Air Corps also provides support for the HSE's Emergency Aeromedical Support (EAS) service which operates on a daily basis, during daylight hours, out of Custume Barracks, Athlone. In addition, it provides further support to the HSE through the provision of an emergency inter-hospital air ambulance service and, from time to time, also undertakes a number of other approved operations in support of various civil authorities.

Naval Service

The Naval Service is based at Haulbowline, Co. Cork, where it has an operational headquarters, an operations command, a logistical support command and a Naval Service College. The Naval Service provides the maritime component of the State's Defence capabilities. The Naval Service is the State's principal sea going agency and provides a broad range of supports in the maritime domain. On any given patrol day, the Naval Service can carry out a number of taskings on behalf of other State agencies such as the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), An Garda Síochána and the Revenue Commissioners.

Between May 2015 and October 2018, Naval Service vessels were deployed overseas on a regular basis to assist with the collective effort to save lives in the Mediterranean. Initially, this was under 'Operation Pontus' which was a humanitarian search and rescue mission conducted as part of a bilateral agreement with Italy. Subsequently, following Government approval, from October 2017 the vessel deployment was under the EU Naval Mission in the Mediterranean, known as EUNAVFOR MED or 'Operation Sophia', until October 2018. Following a decision adopted by the European Council in March 2019 to temporarily suspend deployment of its naval assets, no further naval vessels were deployed. However, two Defence Forces personnel continued to serve in the mission Operational Headquarters in Rome. On 31 March 2020, the EU launched Operation Irini and closed Operation Sophia. Operation Irini has as its primary mission the imposition of the UN Arms embargo to intercept arms being smuggled by sea into Libya. It has no role in relation to the rescue of migrants, other than in accordance with the requirements of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. In May 2020, the Government approved Ireland's participation in Operation Irini. Approval provides for Ireland taking up three positions in the Operation Headquarters in Rome and up to two positions in the Force Headquarters. Consideration of an operational deployment of Defence Forces assets to the mission may arise for consideration in due course.

Naval Service vessels also participate from time to time in foreign visits in support of Irish diplomacy and trade.

Reserve Defence Force

The RDF consists of the First Line Reserve (FLR), the Army Reserve and the Naval Service Reserve.

The FLR is comprised of former members of the PDF who have undertaken to, either voluntarily or on foot of a contractual commitment, complete a period of service in the FLR. The current strength of the FLR, as at 30 November 2021, is 267 personnel.

The Army Reserve and Naval Service Reserve are comprised of individuals, from a broad variety of backgrounds, who have voluntarily committed to complete a period of military service. The current effective strength of the Army Reserve, as at 30 November 2021, is 1,368 personnel which is well below its authorised strength of 3,869 personnel. The current effective strength of the Naval Service Reserve, at the same date, is 116 personnel, also well below its authorised strength of 200 personnel.

1.2 Roles of the Defence Forces

The roles of the Defence Forces are set out in Chapter 3 of this report.

2. National and International Security

2.1 Domestic Security/Aid to the Civil Power

Internal security is primarily the responsibility of An Garda Síochána with the Defence Forces playing a key role in providing, on request, ATCP support. In contrast to many countries, Ireland has a predominantly unarmed police force and, as a result, the Defence Forces provide internal security supports to An Garda Síochána on an on-going basis. Some typical examples of such support are outlined below.

2.1.1 Garda Air Support Unit

The Air Corps supports An Garda Síochána in the operation of two helicopters and a fixed wing aircraft, which form the GASU. The Air Corps provides regulatory oversight and piloting for the two helicopters and also has responsibility for maintenance of the fixed wing aircraft. The Air Corps support to the GASU is covered by the terms of a Service Level Agreement.

2.1.2 Explosive Ordnance Disposal

EOD teams regularly respond to requests made by An Garda Síochána for Defence Forces assistance in dealing with a suspect device or for the removal of old ordnance. EOD teams provide a unique response capability within the State to deal with such incidents. This capability has been developed over many years in operational environments both at home and overseas, and has been further enhanced in the area of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) operations.

2.1.3 Static Guard and Cash Escorts for the Central Bank

The Department of Defence recoups the full economic costs incurred as a result of escort and security services provided by the Defence Forces to the Central Bank. The total cost of this service annually is in the region of €1.3m.

2.1.4 Joint Task Force on Drug Interdiction

The Joint Task Force (JTF), which was established in 1993, enhances co-operation between An Garda Síochána, the Revenue Commissioners and the Naval Service in enforcing the law in

relation to drug trafficking at sea. The JTF is brought together when An Garda Síochána and Revenue review intelligence received and consider that a joint operation should be mounted.

2.1.5 Prison Security

At the direction of Government, the Defence Forces continue to provide security at Portlaoise Prison. They also provide prisoner escorts to and from the courts and hospitals, at the request of An Garda Síochána.

2.1.6 Security at Key Locations

Also at the direction of Government, Military Police provide a 24/7/365 presence in Government Buildings in support of An Garda Síochána and to support the security needs within the Government Buildings/Leinster House complex.

At the request of An Garda Síochána, the Defence Forces provide static 24/7/365 security at the Irish Industrial Explosives premises in Enfield, Co. Meath.

2.2 Aid to the Civil Authority and other tasks

In addition to providing ATCP, and participating in overseas peace support operations, the Defence Forces also undertake a broad range of tasks on a day-to-day basis, and across a wide range of contingencies, in its ATCA role. Examples of this would include providing assistance to the local authorities and the HSE during flooding/severe weather events, wildland fires etc. that can occur throughout the country.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and Service Level Agreements (SLA) have been developed in order to improve working relationships, service delivery and performance measurement. The general approach, where services are provided by the Defence Forces on a recurring basis to other Government Departments and Agencies, has been to agree a MOU or a SLA as a framework for the provision of services. At present 49 such agreements are in place.

2.2.1 Fishery Protection

The Naval Service conducts routine maritime surveillance patrols throughout Ireland's maritime jurisdiction on a day to day basis. In doing so, the primary tasking of the Naval Service is to provide a fishery protection service based on outputs agreed annually with the SFPA in accordance with the State's fishery protection legislation and its obligations as a member of the European Union. On any given patrol day, the Naval Service can carry out a number of taskings on behalf of other State agencies such as An Garda Síochána and the Customs Service of the Revenue Commissioners.

The Naval Service provision of a fishery protection service is augmented by the Air Corps' maritime patrol aircraft, again on the basis of outputs agreed annually with the SFPA. During 2020, the Naval Service carried out a total of 781 fishery patrol days while the Air Corps carried out a total of 152 separate patrols.

2.2.2 Air Ambulance

The Air Corps provide a long-standing emergency inter-hospital transfer service within Ireland and to the United Kingdom in support of the HSE. This service is underpinned by a SLA which formalises arrangements for the provision of the service by the Air Corps.

In addition, the Air Corps also supports the HSE's Emergency Aeromedical Support (EAS) service. This service commenced in June 2012 and was initially established on a pilot basis. A permanent service was established following a Government decision in July 2015. The Air Corps supports this service through the provision of a dedicated helicopter operating during daylight hours out of Custume Barracks, Athlone, with reserve support being provided by the Irish Coast Guard. Since being established, the Air Corps has performed over 3,080 missions.

2.2.3 Ministerial Air Transport Service

The MATS is delivered primarily by the use of the Learjet 45 aircraft. The Learjet has a capacity to carry seven passengers and can be tasked with short and medium haul missions to the UK and Europe. A total of 11 Lear missions took place in 2020, while the CASA maritime patrol aircraft was used for five missions and the PC12 aircraft for a further three.

An inter-departmental high-level group of officials (the MATS Review Group) is to examine options for the future provision of the MATS. The MATS Review Group is preparing a Report to Government with recommendations and its work remains ongoing.

2.3 International Security and Defence Policy

2.3.1 EU Battlegroups

The term 'Battlegroup' is a standard technical military term. Essentially, it is a battalion-sized force with its support elements; including transport and logistics. The overall size is about 1,500 personnel. EU Battlegroups have a readiness to deploy within five to ten days to a range of possible missions, sustainable for 30 days extendable to 120 days. Battlegroups, as part of the EU's (Common Security and Defence Policy) CSDP, offer a stand-by military capability that enables the EU to react to a crisis situation, if requested to do so by the UN. The stand-by period is for six months.

Participation in EU Battlegroups demonstrates Ireland's commitment to the development of EU capabilities in the area of crisis management and contributes to our overall credibility within the Union. Experience has shown that Ireland's participation in the Nordic Battlegroup in 2008, 2011 and 2015 and the Austro-German Battlegroup in 2012 has enhanced the Defence Forces' ability to work with other nations in a multi-national environment and has served to enhance the Defence Forces reputation as a provider of a credible military capability. Ireland also participated in both the German led and the UK led Battlegroups during the second half of 2016. More recently, Ireland has been engaged with the German led Battlegroup which was on standby during the second half of 2020.

The Defence Forces participation in Battlegroups also supports Ireland's efforts in securing partners for UN blue hat operations, due to the close civil and military relationships built

through our participation. For example, Finland, which participated in the Nordic Battlegroup has since partnered with Ireland in Chad and Lebanon.

Ireland's participation in Battlegroups is subject to the "Triple Lock" requirements of a UN Mandate and Government and Dáil approval, as appropriate, in accordance with the Defence Acts.

2.3.2 Coordinated Annual Review

The Coordinated Annual Review (CARD) on Defence is a two-year cycle and aims to create greater transparency by sharing Member States' information on future defence policy, capability development, budgets and investment. The initial CARD process commenced in 2017 and Ireland has participated fully in all phases. The first full CARD cycle commenced with CARD bilateral dialogues between Member States and the EDA taking place from September 2019 – March 2020 and provided a comprehensive review on the state of the European defence capability landscape. The Aggregated CARD Analysis, which incorporates all Member States data, was finalised in June 2020 and Ministers adopted the CARD Report in November 2020. The CARD report and its findings will support Member States to be better placed and more informed to enable greater coordination with their defence planning and spending and engage in collaborative projects, improving consistency in Member States defence spending and overall coherence of the European capability landscape.

2.3.3 Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

PESCO (see also Appendix 5) is a process under which groups of Member States can come together to develop capabilities in support of CSDP operations, to develop and make available additional capabilities and enablers for peacekeeping and crisis management operations. PESCO participants commit to meeting a range of financial, investment, operational and capability commitments. 25 Member States have joined PESCO (Denmark and Malta have not).

Ireland's participation in PESCO was agreed by Government and approved by Dáil Éireann prior to the adoption of the Council Decision establishing PESCO on 11th December 2017. Ireland is a participant in one PESCO project (Greek-led Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance). Ireland also has Observer status on a further nine PESCO projects. There are currently 60 PESCO projects.

2.3.4 Proposed European Peace Facility

The European Peace Facility (EPF) is an off-budget funding mechanism outside of the European Union's multi-annual budget. It is intended to enable the financing of all Common Foreign and Security Policy actions having military or defence implications by both drawing together existing off-budget mechanisms such as the Athena mechanism and the African Peace Facility and eliminating existing gaps in the Union's external action toolbox. The EPF may also be used to finance capacity building of EU partners relating to military or defence matters in pursuit of CFSP objectives.

2.3.5 European Defence Agency

Ireland joined the EDA when it was established in 2004. The Agency is headed by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The Mission of the EDA is to support

the Council and the Member States in their effort to improve the EU's defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the CSDP as it stands now and develops in the future. The work of the Agency is achieved through a Steering Board comprising EU Defence Ministers of the participating Member States.

The EDA's main aims are to support Member States in the area of capability development, to support greater efficiency and competition in the European defence equipment market and to support and improve investment in defence and security research and technology. "Pooling & Sharing" is an EU concept which refers to Member States-led initiatives and projects to increase collaboration on military capabilities.

2.3.6 European Defence Fund

The European Defence Fund (EDF) is an industrial sectoral programme, providing funding for research and capability development, which supports the European Defence and Industrial Technology Base in delivering capabilities for Common Security Defence Policy operations.

The EDF provides a financial mechanism designed to enable and accelerate cooperation among Member States to better coordinate, supplement and amplify national investments in defence. Through the co-funded European Defence Fund, Member States will be able to achieve greater output and develop defence technology and equipment that may not be feasible on their own, by pooling national resources. The Fund will also foster innovation and allow economies of scale, which will enhance the competitiveness of the EU defence industry.

The Fund will be divided into two windows, which are complementary - the Research Window and the Capability Window. As part of the negotiations on the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2021-2027, a final budget which translates into a current value of just under €8 billion was agreed in July 2020. It will be split between a research budget of €2.651 billion, and a capability budget of €5,302 billion.

2.3.7 NATO PfP

Ireland joined PfP on 1st December 1999. Participation in PfP is entirely voluntary. The essence of the PfP programme is a partnership formed individually between each Partner country and NATO, tailored to individual needs and jointly implemented at the level and pace chosen by each participating government.

Ireland's five priority areas of interest are:

- Co-operation on International Peacekeeping;
- Humanitarian operations;
- Search and Rescue;
- Co-operation in the protection of the Environment;
- Co-operation in Marine Matters.

In common with other neutral EU Member States who are members of PfP, Ireland participates in the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) mechanism for planning in relation to peace support operations. The scope of Ireland's involvement in PARP is focused on enhancing interoperability so that Defence Forces personnel can operate efficiently and

effectively in a multi-national environment. Ireland completed the PARP Assessment process in June 2019.

2.3.8 Current Peace Support Operations involving the Defence Forces

A key element of Ireland's contribution to international peace and security is the commitment of personnel to international peace support operations under a UN mandate. As of 1 January 2022, Ireland was contributing 559 Defence Forces personnel to nine different missions throughout the world.

The main overseas mission in which Defence Forces personnel are currently deployed is the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The current contingent (119th Infantry Group) comprises an infantry battalion of 343 troops, four personnel at Sector West headquarters and nine personnel at the Force Headquarters in Naqoura.

The next mission in which a sizeable contingent of Defence Forces personnel is currently deployed is the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights with 138 personnel. The current contingent (64th Infantry Group) is tasked primarily to serve as the Force Mobile Reserve within the UNDOF Area of Responsibility.

Ireland's contribution to the EU Training mission in Mali is currently 20 Defence Forces personnel based in the mission headquarters in Bamako and in Koulikoro Training Centre. The objective of this mission is to improve the capacity of the Malian Armed Forces to maintain security in Mali and restore the authority of the Malian Government and the territorial integrity of the Malian State. Alongside standard infantry training, training is also being provided in international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians and human rights. A contingent of the Defence Forces has been deployed to EUTM Mali since March 2013. A further 14 members of the Defence Forces are deployed to the UN's MINUSMA mission in Mali.

3. Defence Forces Equipment

3.1 Naval Service Vessel Replacement Programme

The White Paper on Defence provides that a minimum eight ship flotilla is required to ensure the operational capability of the Naval Service. A significant investment programme over the past decade has seen the procurement of new four new Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), delivered between 2014 and 2018.

Currently, the Naval Service fleet comprises nine vessels which are (oldest to newest): LÉ Eithne, LÉ Orla, LÉ Ciara, LÉ Roisin, LÉ Niamh, LÉ Samuel Beckett, LÉ James Joyce, LÉ William Butler Yeats and LÉ George Bernard Shaw.

The White Paper provides for the replacement of the current Naval Service flagship LÉ Eithne with a multi role vessel (MRV) which will be enabled for helicopter operations and will also have a freight carrying capacity. Marine Advisors have been appointed to support the procurement of the MRV, and the work underway will inform a public tender competition.

In relation to LÉ Roisín and LÉ Niamh, a Mid-Life Extension Programme is underway with the aim of ensuring the operation of both vessels for the next 15 years. The programme of works has been completed on LÉ Róisín and the ship has returned to operations, while works have commenced on LÉ Niamh.

3.2 Air Corps' Fleet Replacement Programme

The Air Corps operate a fleet of fixed and rotary wing aircraft which provide military support to the Army and Naval Service, together with support for non-military air services such as Garda air support, air ambulance, fisheries protection and the MATS.

The equipment priorities for the Air Corps are also addressed in the context of the White Paper which recognises that there are several new and/or enhanced platforms to be procured. This includes the replacement of the Cessna fixed wing aircraft with three larger aircraft equipped for ISTAR tasks. Following an open tender competition, a contract was placed with Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. in December 2017 at a cost of €43.4m (incl. VAT) for the provision of three PC-12 fixed wing ISTAR equipped aircraft which replaced the Cessna fleet. These new aircraft were delivered in September 2020.

The White Paper also provides for the replacement of the two CASA 235 maritime patrol aircraft with larger more capable aircraft which would enhance maritime surveillance and provide a greater degree of utility for transport and cargo carrying tasks. Following Government approval in December 2019, a contract was signed with Airbus Defence and Space to purchase two new C295 maritime patrol aircraft at a contract value, including equipment fit-out and ancillary support, of €221.6 million (incl. VAT). The new aircraft are scheduled for delivery in 2023.

The existing fleet of eight Pilatus PC9 training aircraft is due replacement in 2025 while the current fleet of two EC135 and six AW139 helicopters are scheduled to continue in operation over the lifetime of the White Paper and no decision has been taken on their replacement. The Air Corps also operates one Lear LR45 aircraft which is used primarily in the provision of the MATS.

Given the unique situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the acquisition of a new PC12 aircraft directly from Pilatus was also completed in 2020. This additional aircraft has provided an enhanced ability to service requests from the HSE and other agencies during this crisis, while also ensuring contingency backup in the event of the Lear or CASA aircraft being unserviceable at times when travel off-island is required in support of evolving national priorities.

3.3 Army Equipment Investment Projects

A number of key armoured projects related to the White Paper are aimed at enabling the Army to retain all-arms conventional military capabilities.

With the focus on essential force protection by armoured vehicles, a significant investment is being made in the Army's fleet of 80 MOWAG armoured personnel carriers. A mid-life upgrade maintenance and upgrade programme for the fleet of vehicles is well underway at a cost of €68m (incl. VAT) for the initial programme of works in the first phase of vehicles

undergoing engineering works. There will be additional works on variant vehicles. This programme of works will extend the utility of the fleet and provide greater levels of protection, mobility and firepower and will seek to ensure viability of the fleet out to 2030.

Other recent enhancements include the acquisition of 10 new Armoured Logistic Vehicles and 24 Armoured Utility Vehicles (4x4s), both of which will provide essential force protection overseas.

3.4 Equipment Development Plan

The National Development Plan provides for a capital allocation of €566m for Defence for the period 2022-2025. This level of capital funding will allow for investment in equipment, and infrastructure, over the coming years.

In this regard, a rolling five-year Equipment Development Planning process has been developed for new equipment projects that will be implemented for the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service. The Equipment Development Plan provides an updated process to identify and prioritise equipment investment over the medium term. This process will provide governance for the prioritisation of defensive equipment procurement and ongoing review of equipment planning requirements in accordance with identified required capabilities. The Plan provides a strategic oversight and visibility to the equipment acquisition process, in terms of cost, schedule and capability development planning requirements.

4. Defence Property

4.1 Existing portfolio

The Defence property portfolio consists of a diverse range of facilities from conventional military barracks to forts, camps, married quarters and training lands. The principal assets are the following 14 permanently occupied installations, the majority of which were taken over in 1922.

- Collins' Barracks, Cork
- Naval Base, Haulbowline, Co. Cork
- Finner Camp, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal
- Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, Dublin 6
- McKee Barracks, Dublin 7
- St. Bricin's Hospital, Dublin 7
- Defence Force Training Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare
- Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick
- Aiken Barracks, Dundalk, Co. Louth
- Gormanston Camp, Gormanston, Co. Meath
- Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell, Dublin 22
- Custume Barracks, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
- Stephens' Barracks, Kilkenny
- Dún Ui Mhaoilíosa (Renmore) Barracks, Galway

In addition to the permanently occupied installations, Defence also administers four rented properties, mainly for use by the RDF.

Defence has an overall portfolio of some 20,000 acres of land, mainly at the Curragh, the Glen of Imaal (Co. Wicklow) and Kilworth Camp (Co. Cork). These provide vital facilities, such as large open spaces and firing ranges, for military training.

The property portfolio includes some 60 married quarters properties which are currently occupied and the majority of these are located within or near the Curragh Camp. In accordance with standing policy, the provision of married quarters is being discontinued in a managed and orderly way. Military personnel are obliged, under Defence Force Regulations, to vacate married quarters within a specified period of being discharged or retired from the PDF.

4.2 Five Year Infrastructure Development Plan

In accordance with the White Paper on Defence, the Department and the Defence Forces published a rolling five-year built infrastructure development plan in 2020.

The Programme reflects the complex environment in which the Defence Forces operate and the corresponding need for appropriate infrastructure to provide for accommodation and training of personnel, maintenance and storage of equipment for land, sea and airborne operational requirements.

It is intended that this Programme will be used as a planning tool and will be subject to joint periodic review by a joint civil-military team. It is also intended that the Programme will be an iterative process for the five years and will be subject to review throughout the lifetime of the White Paper.

5. Summary of operational outputs of the Defence Forces during 2020

5.1 Army

Type of Operation	Number of Operations
Central Bank Cash Escorts	6
Prisoner Escorts	29
Hospital Guard (prisoner)	3
Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Call-outs	81
Explosive Escorts	7
Central Bank Patrols	1,095
Shannon Airport Security Duties	178
Search operations	12
VIP Visits	1*

* This VIP visit resulted in 1,714 workdays support of An Garda Síochána.

Domestically, the Army also provided a year round 24/7 armed guard at the following locations:

24/7 Armed Guard Location	Number of Workdays
Government Buildings	3,875
Central Bank	3,650
Portlaoise Prison	73,871
Explosives Production Facility	3,650

In addition, the Army provided ATCA support to the HSE, to local authorities and to Gardaí in response to ambulance strikes, gorse fires and flooding events during 2020.

5.2 Air Corps

Type of Operation	Number of Missions
Garda Air Support Unit (GASU) missions	1,070
Emergency Aeromedical Support (EAS) missions	366
Civil Assistance missions (e.g. inter-hospital air ambulance)	74
Maritime Patrol missions	152
Ministerial Air Transport Service (MATS) missions	16

5.3 Naval Service

Fishery Protection

No. of fishery patrol days	Sightings	Boardings	Infringements	Detentions
781	1,169	309	15	16

The Naval Service Diving Section responded to five ATCP requests from An Garda Síochána as well as six ATCA requests for support from the Irish Coast Guard and one from the Revenue and Customs Service.

6. Members of the Permanent Defence Force Serving Overseas⁸⁰

6.1 UN MISSIONS

(i)	UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) HQ	9
	UNIFIL 119 th Infantry Battalion	329
	UNIFIL Sector West HQ	4
(ii)	UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation) Israel & Syria	12
(iii)	MONUSCO (United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)	3
(iv)	UNDOF (COS Staff/FHQ Staff – Camp Faouar – Bravo side)	8
	UNDOF 64 th Infantry Group (Camp Faouar – Bravo side)	124
(v)	MINUSMA (Irish Defence Forces Task Unit) Mali	14
	TOTAL	503

6.2 UN MANDATED MISSIONS

(vi)	EUFOR (EU-led Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina)	5
(vii)	EUTM Mali (EU-Led Training Mission)	20
(viii)	KFOR (International Security Presence in Kosovo) HQ	13
(ix)	Naval Service EU Naval Mission (Op Irini) OHQ/FHQ (Op Irini HQ - 3 in OHQ)	3
	TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONNEL SERVING WITH UN MISSIONS	544

6.3 ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

	Staff Officer, High Level Planning Group, Vienna	1
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⁸⁰ Data correct as of 31 January 2022.

6.4	EU MILITARY STAFF (EUMS)	
	Brussels	8
6.5	MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES/ADVISERS/STAFF	
	(i) Military Adviser, Permanent Mission to UN, New York 3 ⁸¹	
	(ii) Military Adviser, Irish Delegation to OSCE, Vienna	1
	(iii) Military Representative to EU (Brussels)	4
	(iv) Liaison Officer of Ireland, NATO /PfP (Brussels)	3
	(v) EU OHQ Operation Althea, Mons, Belgium	1
	(vi) Irish Liaison Officer to SHAPE & Military Co-Op Division, Mons, Belgium	1
6.6	NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE)	
	Tallinn	1
	TOTAL NUMBER OF DEFENCE FORCES PERSONNEL SERVING OVERSEAS	567

⁸¹ Includes Major General Maureen O'Brien serving on secondment to the United Nations following her appointment by the UN as Deputy Military Adviser in the Office of Military Affairs, Department of Peace Operations.

APPENDIX 4 - Summary of Defence Forces' participation in International Missions

The Defence Forces has a distinguished record of serving overseas on peacekeeping operations since 1958, which represents the longest unbroken record of any nation in the world. While the primary focus has traditionally been on multi-national peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, the vast array of missions, and the evolving global security environment, highlights Defence Forces involvement on crisis management and humanitarian operations. This knowledge and experience gained on overseas deployments underlines the need for the future force to be dynamic, flexible and capable of maintaining high levels of readiness in preparation for future deployments.

In the context of the UN's Women, Peace and Security Agenda it should be noted that female participation in overseas missions has fluctuated between 5.65% in 2008, to 3.57% in 2021⁸² and is seen as a priority area for development.

Table 1 and 2 present an overview of the number of individual tours completed to date by the Defence Forces, totalling 71,484. Table 1 provides a summary of active missions, and Table 2 provides a summary of previous Defence Forces involvement in missions.

Table 1: Active Overseas Missions⁸³

Active Overseas Missions	Deployment Commenced	Tours Completed to Date
UNTSO (Israel)	Dec 1958	596
UNIFIL (Lebanon)	May 1978	38,218
OSCE (Vienna)	Jan 1984	48
UNDOF (Syria)	Sep 1991	2,352
OSCE (Bosnia)	Jan 1996	56
KFOR (Kosovo)	Jun 1999	2,866
CSDP/PfP Brussels (Belgium)	Jan 2000	72
EUMS Brussels (Belgium)	Mar 2001	95
MONUC / MONUSCO (DR Congo)	Jun 2001	106
EUFOR (BiH)	Dec 2004	534
EUTM Mali	Mar 2013	253
MINUSMA (Mali)	Sep 2019	56
EU NAVFOR MED IRINI (Italy)	April 2020	6
Total		45,258

⁸² Correct as of 30 November 2021.

⁸³ This list includes UN, EU and NATO missions, and is correct as of 01 April 2021.

Table 2: Previous Overseas Missions⁸⁴

Previous Overseas Missions	Deployment Commenced	Deployment Ceased	Tours Completed
UNOGIL	Jun 1958	Dec 1958	50
ONUC	Jul 1960	Jun 1964	6,191
UNTEA	Aug 1962	Oct 1962	2
UNFICYP (Cyprus)	Mar 1964	May 2005	9,655
UNIPOM	Sep 1965	Mar 1966	14
UNEF II	Oct 1973	Sep 1974	573
UNNY (United States)	Nov 1978	Oct 2007	27
UNIT	Jun 1984	Jul 1988	9
UNMOGIP	Sep 1987	Jun 1992	2
UNRWA	Feb 1988	Jun 1992	2
UNMOGAP	Apr 1988	Mar 1990	8
UNIIMOG	Aug 1988	Mar 1991	177
UNTAG	Mar 1989	Apr 1990	20
ONUCA	Dec 1989	Jan 1992	57
OSGAP	Mar 1990	Dec 1994	5
UNAVEM II	Jul 1991	Sep 1993	18
EUMM (Yugoslavia)	Jul 1991	Dec 2007	223
MINURSO (Western Sahara)	Sep 1991	Jul 2021	208
UNAMIC	Nov 1991	Mar 1992	2
UNMLO-Y	Jan 1992	Apr 1992	7
ONUSAL	Jan 1992	May 1994	6
UNTAC	Mar 1992	Nov 1993	36
UNPROFOR	Mar 1992	Feb 1996	29
UNIKOM (Kuwait)	Apr 1992	Mar 2003	69
UNHCR (Y)	Dec 1992	Mar 1993	4
UNOSOM II	Aug 1993	Jan 1995	177
EUNELSA	Jan 1994	May 1994	2
OSCE (Georgia)	Apr 1994	Sep 2008	23
IRSG (RWA)	Aug 1994	Dec 1994	39
UNMIH	Sep 1994	Mar 1996	6
ICFY	Oct 1994	Mar 1996	5
OSGA	Dec 1994	Jul 1996	2
UNTAES	Feb 1996	Jan 1998	10
UNPREDEP	Feb 1996	Feb 1999	8
UNMOP	Feb 1996	Dec 1999	10
UNSMA	Jul 1996	Oct 1999	3
SFOR (BiH)	Jan 1997	Dec 2004	636
OSCE (Albania)	Jan 1997	Jan 2008	14
UNDOF	Jun 1997	Aug 1998	1

⁸⁴ This list includes UN, EU and NATO missions, and is correct as of 01 April 2021.

UNSCOM (Iraq)	Sep 1997	Mar 2003	5
OSCE Croatia	Jan 1998	Apr 2016	24
OSCE Kosovo	Dec 1998	Apr 2016	12
HONDURAS (IISG)	Jan 1999	May 1999	27
UNAMET	Jun 1999	Oct 1999	3
UNMIK (Kosovo)	Jul 1999	Apr 2009	20
INTERFET (East Timor)	Oct 1999	Feb 2000	44
HONDURAS (21 HSG)	Jan 2000	Feb 2000	15
UNTAET (East Timor)	Feb 2000	May 2002	181
OSCE (Yugoslavia)	Jan 2001	Jan 2008	8
HONDURAS (31 HSG)	Jan 2001	Feb 2001	16
OSCE FRYOM	Jul 2001	Dec 2005	5
UNMEE (Ethiopia and Eritrea)	Nov 2001	Jun 2003	630
ISAF (Afghanistan)	Jan 2002	Dec 2014	196
UNMISSET (East Timor)	May 2002	May 2004	90
MINUCI (Côte d'Ivoire)	Jun 2003	Jun 2004	8
ARTEMIS (DR Congo)	Jul 2003	Sep 2003	19
UNMIL (Liberia)	Nov 2003	Jan 2008	2,746
ONUCI (Côte d'Ivoire)	Jun 2004	Mar 2017	38
AMIS (EU Support – Darfur)	Jul 2004	Dec 2007	7
AMIS (Darfur)	Jul 2004	Dec 2007	13
UNJLC	Jan 2005	May 2005	4
ACEH (Indonesia)	Sep 2005	Dec 2006	3
EUFOR RD Congo	Jun 2006	Jan 2007	7
KFOR FN Element (Kosovo)	Aug 2007	Jul 2008	58
EUFOR TCHAD/RCA (Chad)	Oct 2007	Mar 2009	1,677
MINURCAT (Central African Republic and Chad)	Mar 2009	Dec 2010	1,684
EU NAVFOR ATALANTA (UK)	Jun 2009	Dec 2009	2
EUTM Somalia	Apr 2010	Apr 2014	42
UNSMIS (Syria)	May 2012	Aug 2012	6
UN Mine Action Service	Aug 2013	Sep 2014	15
RSM (Afghanistan)	Jan 2015	Mar 2016	14
EU NAVFOR MED SOPHIA (Italy)	Oct 2017	Apr 2020	277
Total			26,226

Ireland is the largest per capita contributor of military personnel in the Western European and Others Grouping at the United Nations and is ranked 6th based on troops currently serving overseas (Figure 1)⁸⁵. Globally, this makes Ireland the 38th largest contributor of Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCC) to the United Nations.

⁸⁵ Data correct as of 31 January 2022.

Appendix 5 – Figure 1 – Current Defence Forces International Deployments



APPENDIX 5 - Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

The establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) by the European Council in December 2017 has raised levels of cooperation on defence among the participating EU Member States. The possibility for Member States to engage – on a voluntary basis – in PESCO was introduced by article 42(6) of the Lisbon Treaty on European Union.

Currently 60 PESCO projects are being developed. Each project is carried forward by varying group of PESCO participating Member States (project members) and is coordinated by one or more PESCO participating Member States (project coordinators). The project members may agree among themselves to allow other participating Member States to join as a project member or to become observer to the project. The projects that are being developed in the context of PESCO cover areas such as training, land, maritime, air, cyber, and joint enablers.

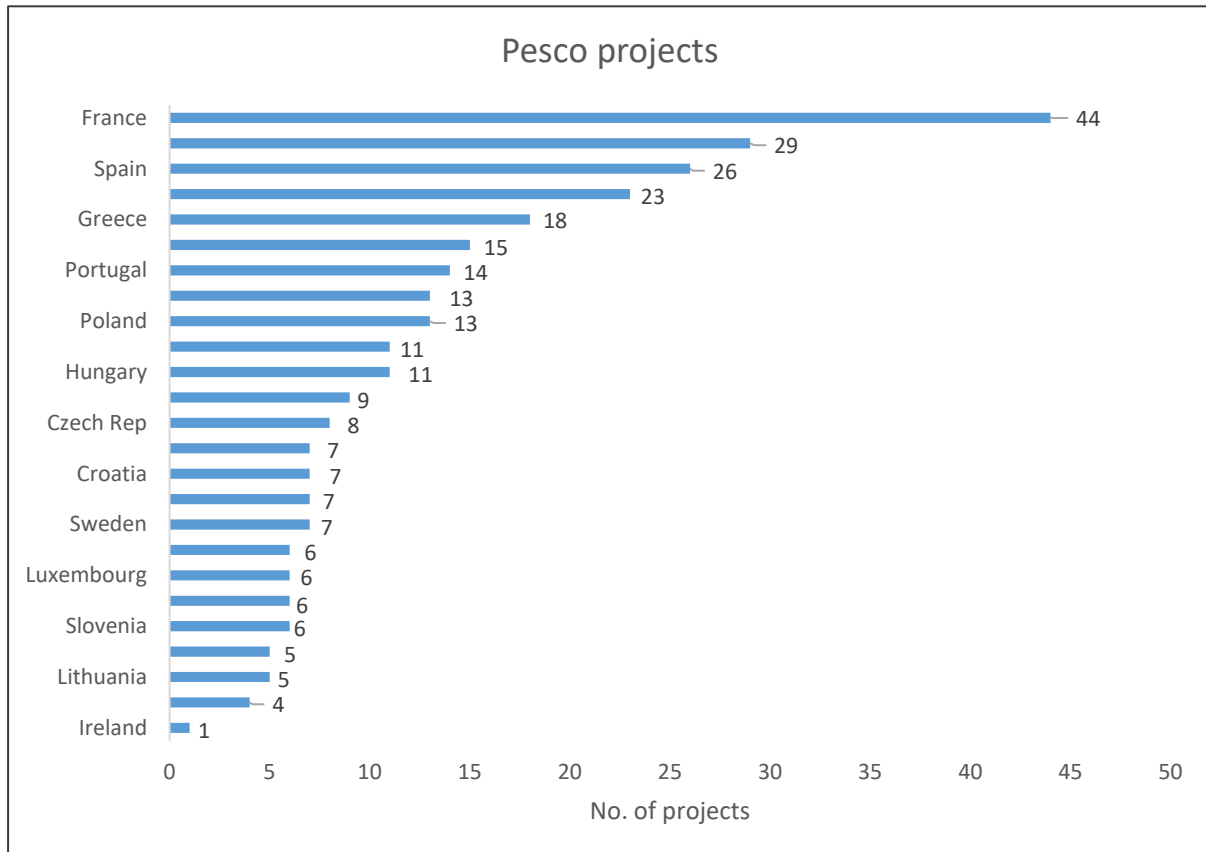
Ireland is currently participating in one PESCO project, while being an observer on a further nine. Table 1 and Figure 1 below summarise the level of engagement that participating Member States have with others across the 60 projects.

Table 1 – PESCO Projects based on Cooperation between participating Member States after 60 projects⁸⁶

	AT	BE	BG	HR	CY	CZ	EE	FI	FR	DE	EL	HU	IE	IT	LV	LT	LU	NL	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	ES	SE
Austria		1	1	3	1	1	2	1	6	4	3	2		4	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	1
Belgium	1		2	2	3	4	3	3	11	7	3	5		6	3	2	2	7	8	3	4	2	3	9	3
Bulgaria	1	2		3	3	1	2	2	6	2	4	2	1	4	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	3	1
Croatia	3	2	3		3	1	2	1	5	2	5	3	1	4	1	3	1	3	3	1	2	3	2	4	1
Cyprus	1	3	3	3		1	1	1	6	3	8	3	1	5	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	5	1
Czechia	1	4	1	1	1		3	2	6	7	1	3		4	2	1	2	5	3	1	2	2	2	5	2
Estonia	2	3	2	2	1	3		3	6	3	1	3		4	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	1	2	3	2
Finland	1	3	2	1	1	2	3		5	4	1	2		4	2	2	2	4	3	2	1	1	1	4	1
France	6	11	6	5	6	6	6	5		21	10	8	1	21	4	4	6	12	10	9	12	5	4	21	7
Germany	4	7	2	2	3	7	3	4	21		4	6		11	2	3	5	11	8	7	6	5	3	15	3
Greece	3	3	4	5	8	1	1	1	10	4		3	1	11	2	2	2	3	4	5	5	2	3	7	1
Hungary	2	5	2	3	3	3	3	2	8	6	3			5	2	2	2	5	7	2	3	4	4	6	3
Ireland			1	1	1				1		1			1											1
Italy	4	6	4	4	5	4	4	4	21	11	11	5	1		1	3	4	6	7	7	6	2	5	15	2
Latvia	1	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	4	2	2	2		1		1	1	3	3	2	3	1	1	2	1
Lithuania	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	4	3	2	2		3	1		3	3	2	1	2	2	2	3	1
Luxembourg	3	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	6	5	2	2		4	1	3		3	2	3	3	1	2	4	2
Netherlands	2	7	2	3	2	5	4	4	12	11	3	5		6	3	4	3		7	3	4	3	3	8	2
Poland	2	8	2	3	2	3	4	3	10	8	4	7		7	3	3	2	7		5	6	3	3	7	3
Portugal	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	8	7	4	2		7	1	1	3	2	4		5	2	1	10	2
Romania	3	4	3	2	1	2	4	1	12	6	5	2		6	3	2	3	4	6	6		2	2	5	3
Slovenia	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	5	5	2	4		2	1	2	1	3	3	2	2		2	3	1
Slovakia	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	4	3	3	4		5	1	2	2	3	3	1	2	2		3	3
Spain	3	9	3	4	5	5	3	4	21	15	7	6	1	15	2	3	4	8	7	10	5	3	3		5
Sweden	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	1	7	3	1	3		2	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	3	5	

⁸⁶ Source: Daniel Fiott, Nov 2021/2020, PESCO Secretariat.

Figure 1 – PESCO Projects per Participating Member State⁸⁷.



⁸⁷ Source: Daniel Fiott, Nov 20212020, PESCO Secretariat.

APPENDIX 6 - High Level Command and Control - Responsibilities

Key roles and responsibilities for the future high-level Command and Control are outlined in this Appendix.

As recommended in Chapter 7, high level Command and Control, and associated authority, would be invested in the Chief of Defence (CHOD), who should be supported by the three Service Chiefs and a Joint Force Commander, who should also be the Vice-CHOD. This high-level senior leadership team which, at the discretion of the CHOD may be formalised as a Command Board or similar title, should support the CHOD in managing issues connected to the development of the Joint Force and ensuring that the three components remain fit for purpose for current and future operations.

The key support functions that the CHOD will require in order to fulfil his/her taskings as provided by Government should be provided by the Defence Staff located in Defence Force Headquarters. The key contributors to this staff, whose roles are outlined below and which could be managed by the CHOD with the assistance of the Assistant CHOD and the Head of Transformation, should include, at a minimum; the Gender Advisor and the heads of the Office of Human Resources, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Strategic Planning and Governance, Office of Reserve Affairs and the Office of Joint Capability Development. The Vice CHOD, and the Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Force may also attend meetings of the Defence Staff, as deemed appropriate.

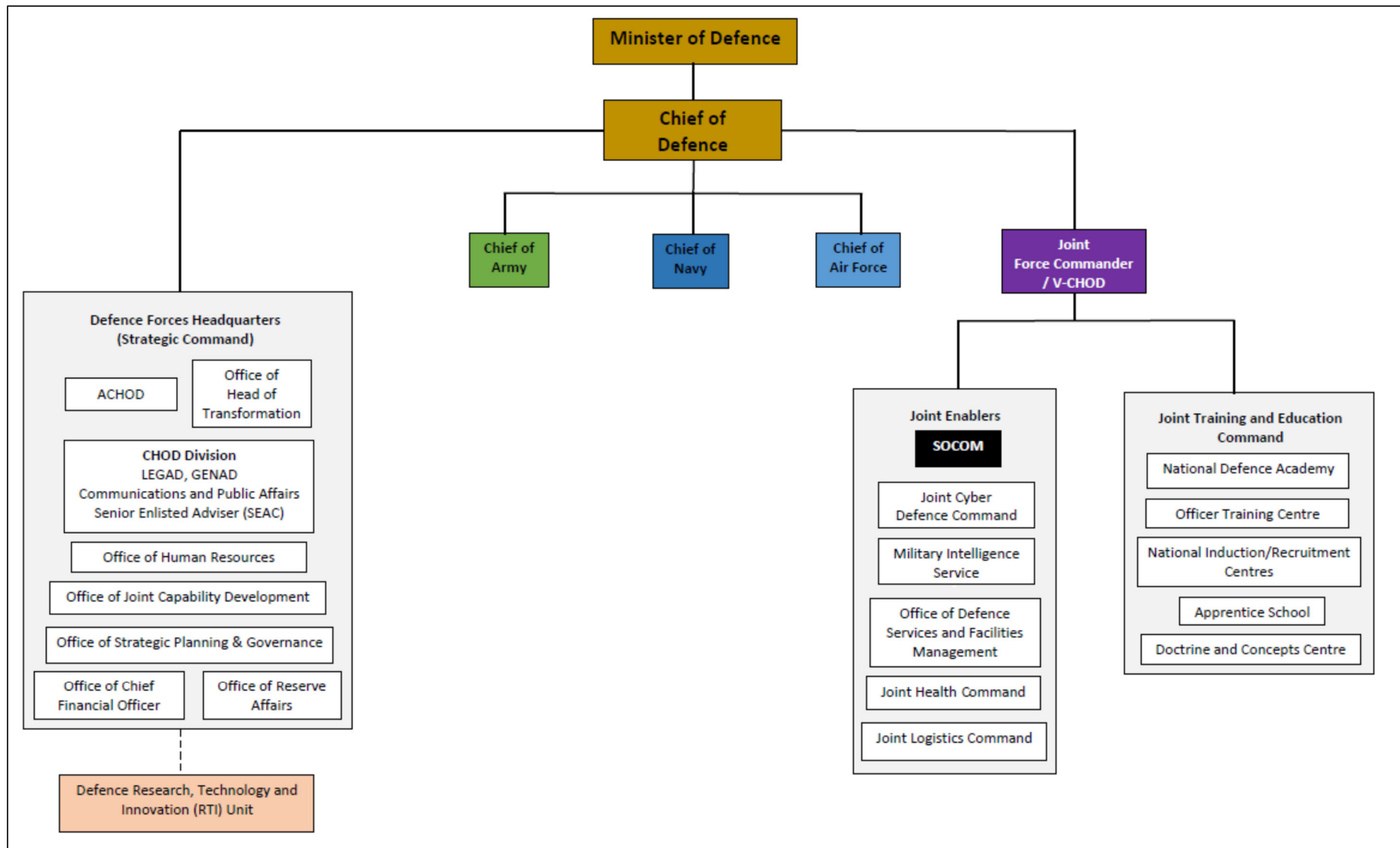
Figure 1 provides an overview of the proposed high-level Command and Control structure, and the sections below that reflect the three core areas which are: Defence Forces Headquarters; Joint Enablers; and Joint Training and Education Command.

Figure 2 then outlines a potential structure for the Joint Force Command, with key commands included, while Figure 3 indicates some of the key roles in the proposed structure for Defence Forces Headquarters.

These role descriptors outlined in this Appendix are not intended to be definitive but are provided in order to guide the creation of a modern high-level Command and Control structure for the Defence Forces, out to 2030 and beyond.

The Commission also reiterates its belief that some of the high-level positions, such as the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Defence Services and Facilities Management should be civilianised. This approach is common in other international comparators and has been hugely beneficial in bringing new concepts to enhance organisational efficacy.

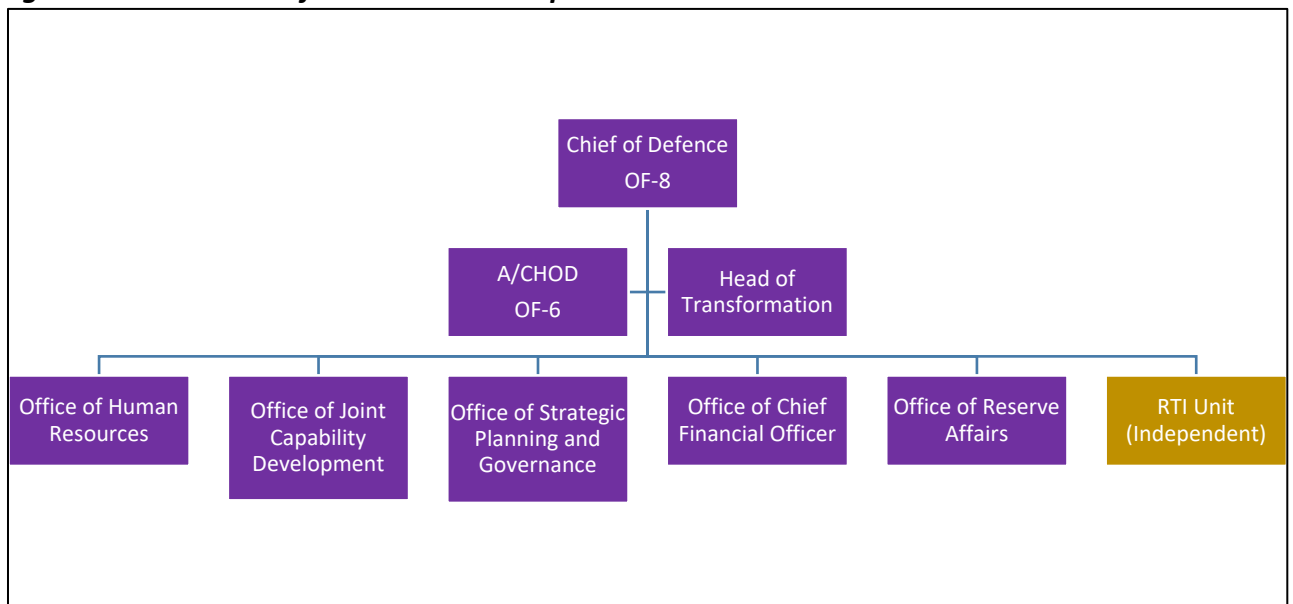
Figure 1 – Proposed high-level Command and Control Structure.



- **Chief of Defence (CHOD) Division**

Within Defence Forces Headquarters, the CHOD should be supported by key advisers which will include a Legal Advisor (LEGAD), a Gender Advisor (GENAD) and a Communications and Public Affairs office. The Commission also notes that the role of Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEAC), as provided for in Figure 1, is now common place in a number of armed forces. The Defence Forces have recently introduced such a role, on a temporary basis, in DFHQ as an additional task for a senior NCO. The Commission welcomes this and recommends that the joint position is made permanent for the purposes of bringing the expertise and experience of the senior NCO appointee to the top table. It should be noted that the role of the Senior Enlisted Advisor does not encompass acting in a representative capacity which is the role of representative associations.

Figure 2 – Potential Defence Forces Headquarters Command Structure



- **Defence Forces Headquarters (Strategic Command)**

The high level Command and Control, and associated authority, invested in the CHOD should be supported by Defence Force Headquarters (Strategic Command). This headquarters should be the interface between the Defence Forces and the civil element of the Department of Defence, and other government departments. The headquarters should be responsible for creating the medium to long-term strategic planning of the Defence Forces in collaboration with its civilian counterparts. The headquarters should include all of the key supporting enablers for strategic planning within the Defence Forces, as outlined in Figure 2 above and described underneath. This headquarters should assist the CHOD, who should be supported by the A/CHOD, and an externally recruited Head of Transformation.

- **A/CHOD and Head of Transformation**

The Head of Transformation should be recruited externally and appointed for a five year period to support the CHOD directly with the transformation of the Defence Forces. He/she would be the senior leader responsible for all HR and Finance functions and would specifically head the HR Change Leadership Team. The Head of Transformation would also support the CHOD in the development and implementation of the Defence Forces strategic plans. This person in this role should work closely with the A/CHOD who would have overall responsibility for the Office of Strategic Planning and Governance, and the Office of Joint Capability Development.

- **Office of Reserve Affairs**

The Commission remains concerned about the evident lack of input from the Reserve Defence Force (RDF) at the strategic level of the organisation. This office should be responsible for creating a modern and adaptable Army, Naval and Air Reserve capability that should support and augment the Defence Forces at home and overseas where necessary. The role of the Office of Reserve Affairs is further outlined in Chapter 9.

- **Office of Human Resources**

The Office of Human Resources should be responsible for all the functions that enable the Defence Forces to manage its people as a key strategic resource. A key role should be the development of a Strategic HR Strategy for the future force, including the development of contemporary career management and competitive promotion opportunities for all ranks.

- **Office of Strategic Planning and Governance**

The Office of Strategic Planning and Governance should be responsible for the development of pan-Defence Forces organisational strategy, planning, and performance reporting activities. This role should also encompass and be responsible for the governance elements of the Defence Forces.

- **Office of Joint Capability Development**

The Office of Joint Capability Development should be a civil-military unit that should be responsible for the management and development of the Defence Forces future capability requirements. The Office of Joint Capability Development should work closely with the RTI Unit⁸⁸ and should comprise senior civil and military leaders and supporting enablers.

⁸⁸ The Research, Technology and Innovation Unit is a joint civil military unit which lies within the Department of Defence and has a broad mandate that goes beyond just military capability. It is included in Figure 2 to highlight that capability development will have multiple inputs and is not under the CHOD.

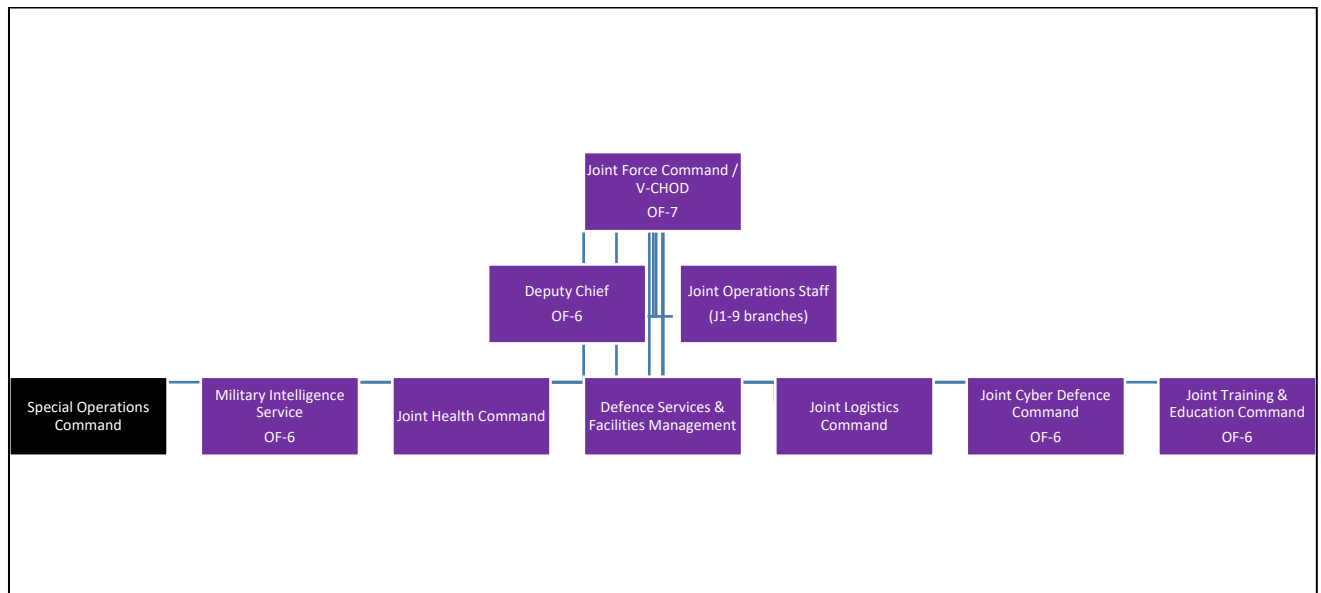
- **Office of Chief Financial Officer**

The externally recruited Chief Financial Officer should be the principal financial advisor to the CHOD and should be responsible for all Defence Forces financial matters. The Chief Financial Officer should have the responsibility for the financial management of the delegated budgets as well as providing strategic and operational support and advice at all levels in the Defence Forces. He/she should provide Defence Forces management with financial information to assist with decision making and the delivery of improved services and value for money throughout the organisation.

- **Joint Force Command**

Key roles and responsibilities for the future Joint Force Command are outlined in Figure 3 below and described underneath.

Figure 3 – Potential Joint Force Command Structure



- **Joint Force Command (JFC) / V-CHOD**

The Joint Force Commander should lead an integrated Joint Force Command, which should include a lean and agile Joint Operations Staff (comprising J1 to J9 branches⁸⁹) therefore enabling the unified and effective command of operations. In addition, the Joint Force Commander should also act as Vice CHOD, and should have the required delegated command responsibility during periods that the CHOD is absent or incapacitated. The Joint Force Commander should command operations including Special Forces Operations (SOCOM), Joint Cyber Defence Command (cyber, including counter hybrid), international

⁸⁹ J1 Personnel, J2 Intelligence, J3 Current Operations, J4 Logistics/Medical, J5 Joint Plans and Policy, J6 Command, Control, Communications and Computers/Cyber, J7 Joint Force Development, J8 Finance, Resources, and Assessment, J9 Legal and Media Operations.

deployments, pre-deployment training, unit readiness and evaluation activities, combined and joint training exercises, and other activities as directed. The JFC should be responsible for combined and joint training and will ensure alignment of service level training to common goals as a number of Joint Commands and Joint Capabilities should report to him/her. In modernising the current support elements in the Defence Forces, the Commission proposes that the Joint Force Commander should also be the coordinating commander for the following key joint enablers.

- **Special Operations Command (SOCOM)**

Special Operations Command should provide command and oversight of special operations forces. This element of JFC will reduce the operational and strategic burden on the commander of IRL SOF. The Commander of Special Operations Command should report to Joint Force Command.

- **Military Intelligence Service**

The Head of the Military Intelligence Service (OF-6) will be a tri-service appointment. The role of Military Intelligence is outlined in Section 7.5 of Chapter 7 and will be a key enabler for all military operations, across all domains, and be responsible for providing accurate and timely intelligence for operational commanders.

- **Joint Cyber Defence Command**

The role of Joint Cyber Defence Command is outlined in Section 7.6 of Chapter 7. Led by the Head of Cyber Defence Command (OF-6), this Command should manage the Defence Forces' IT Services, CIS Services and Cyber Defence (including directing and controlling the three main categories of cyberspace operations).

- **Office of Defence Services and Facilities Management**

The head of this office should be a civilian post filled by open recruitment or assignment, and should be responsible for the management and modernisation of the Defence Forces estate and all Defence Forces' infrastructure. The Office should also support a wide variety of joint enabling functions within the Defence Forces.

- **Joint Health Command**

International trends and recognised best practice point towards defence health services being commanded and delivered on a joint basis. The Joint Health Command should be responsible for the delivery of military medicine and joint healthcare services to all Defence Forces personnel. The Command should also be responsible for the development of the health preparedness of Defence Forces personnel for operations and the coordination of health units for deployment in support of operations. The Health

Command could be formed by reforming the Central Medical Unit Headquarters and placing Air Corps 504 (Medical) Squadron and the Naval Medical Section under its command. In line with international practice, Health Command and healthcare units should be commanded by specialist personnel. The Commission proposes that this should not be limited to Medical Officers and all healthcare specialists should be able to hold command appointments.

- **Joint Logistics Command**

The Joint Logistics Command should be responsible for the planning, coordination and delivery of military logistics, the evaluation of joint logistics capabilities and requirements, explosive ordnance, fuel services, joint movements, logistics information systems, and the defence supply chain. The Command should be responsible for the delivery of agile and adaptable logistical support for sustaining national and international operations, thereby supporting the three services in building and maintaining force capability.

- **Joint Training and Education Command**

As illustrated in Figure 1 above, and described in Section 7.8 of Chapter 7, the proposed Joint Training and Education Command, under the Joint Force Commander / Vice CHOD should comprise the following:

- **National Defence Academy**

This Academy should be responsible for preparing Defence Forces personnel as well as supporting other national bodies where necessary. The Academy should aspire to create a modern institute that promotes defence and security studies and will engage with relevant research areas. The Academy should additionally be the focal point for military intelligence and cyber education to enhance Defence Forces operational capabilities. This Academy should include the Institute for Peace Support and Leadership Training and the UN Training School Ireland (UNTSI).

- **Officer Training Centre**

The proposed Officer Training Centre would comprise of the existing Cadet School and a new Officer Candidate School which would conduct Potential Officers Courses and Reserve Officers Courses every two years, and Late Entry Officer Courses.

- **National Induction/Recruitment Centres**

These centres will support all elements of the Defence Forces in providing initial training to new recruits.

- **Apprentice School**

The Apprentice School should aspire to become a military centre of excellence for supporting the future tech-enabled Defence Forces. The future force will be required to leverage the growth in technology including *inter alia* remote sensing, analytics, automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, intelligence augmentation and virtual reality. Defence Forces personnel should be trained to National Framework of Qualifications standards in order to maximise the ability to meet the challenges of contemporary and future defence and security operating environments.

- **Doctrine and Concepts Centre**

The Doctrine and Concepts Centre should liaise with and support the three services in developing modern doctrine. The strategic intent of this centre should be to develop modern publications to support national defence policy and to create doctrine which should provide guidance for commander's based on best international practice. The centre should maximise the operational experience of Defence Forces personnel and contribute to designing a modern Defence Forces, capable of operating in the future.

APPENDIX 7 – Current disposition of the Defence Forces

The Commission examined the current structures and disposition of the Defence Forces. Tables 1 and 2 below provide an overview of the current numbers and locations of the Permanent and Reserve elements⁹⁰.

Table 1 – Permanent Defence Force

Formation	Locations	Strength	Establishment
DFHQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKee Barracks • Newbridge 	181	326
DFTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curragh Camp • Coolmoney Camp 	1,399	1,302
1 Brigade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collins Barrack, Cork • Renmore, Galway • Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick • Stephens Barracks, Kilkenny • Kilworth Camp, Cork 	2,057	2,345
2 Brigade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin • Custume Barracks, Athlone • Aiken Barracks, Dundalk • Gormanston Camp, Louth • Finner Camp, Donegal • Kilbride Camp 	2,698	2,988
Air Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casement Aerodrome, Dublin 	751	886
Naval Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haulbowline, Cork 	856	1,094
Other Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Medical Unit • DFHQ CIS Coy • Equitation School • School of Music • Military Judge • Overseas Establishment • Office of Emergency Planning • Representative Associations 	526	559
Total (WTE)		8,468	9,500

⁹⁰ All details are correct as of the 31 December 2021.

Table 2 – Reserve Defence Force - Army Reserve (AR) and Naval Service Reserve

Formation	Locations	Strength	Establishment
DFHQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKee Barracks 	18	163
DFTC – AR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curragh Camp 	105	169
1 Brigade – AR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collins Barrack • Renmore • Clifden • Ennis, Clare • Sarsfield Barracks • Stephens Barracks • Mallow • Tralee • Skibbereen • Waterford • Wexford 	621	1,703
2 Brigade – AR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathal Brugha Barracks • Bray • Custume Barracks • Mullingar • Castlebar • Boyle • Aiken Barracks • Cavan • Navan • St Bricins • Gormanston Camp • Finner Camp • Letterkenny • Sligo • Kilbride Camp 	741	1,834
Naval Service Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cork • Dublin • Waterford • Limerick 	126	200
Total		1,611	4,069

APPENDIX 8 – PDF Strength versus Establishment⁹¹

Rank (Army/NS)	Army Strength/ Establishment	Naval Service Strength/ Establishment	Air Corps Strength/ Establishment	Total Strength/ Establishment
Commissioned Ranks				
Lieutenant General	1/1	0/0	0/0	1/1
Major General	2/2	0/0	0/0	2/2
Brigadier General/Commodore	6/6	1/1	1/1	8/8
Colonel/Captain	35/35	3/2	2/2	40/39
Lieutenant Colonel/Commander	106/112	13/13	16/14	135/139
Commandant/Lieutenant Commander	259/255	50/45	44/36	353/336
Captain/Lieutenant	232/306	59/81	41/65	332/452
Lieutenant/Ensign	293/167	37/41	56/48	386/256
Total Officers	934/884	163/183	160/166	1,257/1,233
Enlisted Ranks				
Sergeant Major/Warrant Officer	27/29	6/6	6/8	39/43
Brigade Quartermaster/Senior Chief Petty Officer	31/32	6/7	4/4	41/43
Company Sergeant/Chief Petty Officer	107/115	71/75	47/56	225/246
Company Quartermaster/Senior Petty Officer	165/169	14/15	14/14	193/198
Sergeant/Petty Officer	783/973	128/226	91/131	1,002/1,330
Corporal/Leading Seaman	1,176/1,438	144/180	138/183	1,458/1,801
Private/Seaman	3,592/3,880	341/402	280/324	4,213/4,606
Cadet (classified as enlisted in training)	83/0	12/0	16/0	111/0
Total Enlisted	5,964/6,636	722/911	596/720	7,282/8,267
TOTAL	6,898/7,520	885/1,094	756/886	8,539/9,500

⁹¹ All details correct as at 30 November 2021.

APPENDIX 9 - Health services currently available to members of the Defence Forces

At present, a wide range of medical services are provided to members of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) at State expense. These include: an annual medical examination, sick parades, attendance at GP surgery outside of sick parade and out of hours GP services, prescription services, laboratory services, physiotherapy, chiropody, radiology, ophthalmic examinations, mental health services provided by a psychiatrist and two psychologists, in-patient and outpatient public hospital charges and routine dental treatment. These items are expanded on below.

In addition to the above, commissioned officers and members of the Army Nursing Service can avail of private consultant appointments and diagnostic tests, and private/semi-private hospital treatment dependent on rank, including private/semi-private maternity care for female officers. The Programme for Government contains a commitment to extend this range of benefits to the enlisted ranks in the Defence Forces and a Working Group has been established to bring forward proposals on this matter.

In the case of Defence Forces personnel assigned to longer term overseas administrative posts (e.g. EUMS, OSCE), these personnel, and any accompanying dependents are provided with global comprehensive medical insurance for which a formal arrangement is in place with a health insurance provider. This involves the organisation paying the difference between a basic minimum payment and the cost of the global plan.

The provision of this range of benefits is unique in the public and indeed the private sectors and these benefits are exempt from benefit-in-kind taxation. While the primary purpose of the medical care package is to ensure maximum operational capability and readiness of members of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF), there is no doubt that it is of significant benefit to the individual.

The following medical services are provided to members of the PDF free of charge:

Annual Medical Examination

All personnel are required to undergo a mandatory medical examination at least once a year. This medical includes a detailed and comprehensive review of the individual's medical history, a full physical examination and review of physical fitness test results.

Primary Care medical services provided

- Sick Parades: Sick parades, similar to a GP surgery, are provided each morning and in the afternoon as required in each military barracks. Sick parade involves patient assessment, maintenance of patient records and files, ongoing review of medical assessment and condition, prescription and treatment where necessary.
- Attendance at GP surgery outside of Sick Parade: contractual arrangements are in place with a number of out-of-hours GP services around the country for military personnel

who fall ill at night, or while on local, weekend, annual or other leave. Where this service is not available in a particular location, personnel may attend GPs and will be reimbursed for any costs arising.

- Prescriptions: The provision of medicines and vaccines is an integral part of the medical service provided to members of the Defence Forces. To control and monitor access to medicines and dressings, for purposes of safety, efficiency and economy of use, prescriptions are required for drugs and materials that in a civilian context would be available over the counter. Where possible, prescriptions are filled at military pharmacies, however where military dispensing facilities are not available, prescriptions are filled at civilian pharmacies at the Department's expense.

Secondary health care provided for members of the Defence Forces

- Physiotherapy: There are currently 5.5 chartered physiotherapist civilian positions in the Defence Forces. DF Physiotherapy aims to render members of the Defence Forces fit for duty, including overseas service, to return personnel to duty as soon as possible after a physical injury has arisen, and to record an accurate charting of the Defence Force members' physical ability to perform their role. It includes diagnostic, recovery, preventative, and emergency treatments.
- Chiropody: In certain circumstances, where the need arises, military personnel may be referred, by a Defence Forces doctor, to a civilian chiropodist.
- Radiology services: X-Ray services are outsourced to both HSE public services and private diagnostic imaging facilities when deemed necessary and appropriate by a Medical Officer. Ultrasound services where required are outsourced to a contracted external service provider.
- Ophthalmic Examinations: Members of the Defence Forces must meet certain ophthalmic standards for overseas deployment and for continuance in service. Therefore, in certain circumstances where the need arises, military personnel may be referred, by a Defence Forces doctor, to an ophthalmic practitioner for an examination and necessary treatment.
- Clinical Mental Health Services: There are currently two Clinical Psychologists employed by the Defence Forces to provide psychology services. They assess, diagnose treat and advise on strategies to prevent mental health disorders. Psychiatry services are provided by a dedicated in-house civilian psychiatrist. The psychiatrist specialises in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness.
- In-Patient and Out-Patient Public Hospitals Charges: Military personnel are entitled to medical treatment at State expense, so there is no charge when a member of the Defence Forces attends a public hospital A&E or has a stay in hospital.
- Private/Semi-Private Treatment: As noted, commissioned officers and members of the Army Nursing Service (ANS) can avail of private consultant appointments and diagnostic tests, and private/semi-private hospital treatment dependent on rank, including private /semi-private maternity care for female officers. Senior officers (Commandant rank and above), Matrons and Assistant Matrons of the ANS can avail of a private room when in hospital while other officers (Captain rank and below) and other members of the ANS can avail of a semi-private room. Enlisted personnel, in

exceptional circumstances under sanction from a Defence Forces doctor, may also be referred privately.

Dental Treatment:

- Routine dental services are provided to all members of the PDF either by Medical Corps Dental Practitioners or by civilian dental practitioners. Dental services provided include Inspections, Chartings, Radiographs, Scale & Polish, Extractions, Fillings, Root Canal Treatment, Certain Restoration Treatments, Gum/Mouth treatments and certain prosthetics.

Medical Services Provided Overseas:

- Medical services provided to Defence Forces personnel on overseas missions are dependent upon the size of the troop deployment and the extent to which Irish troops can access medical services of other forces. On larger missions the Defence Forces Medical Corps provide routine primary healthcare, specialised first aid, interim/triage emergency surgery/treatment, resuscitation, and stabilisation of casualties, and short-term holding of casualties until they can be returned to duty or be evacuated. On smaller missions these services may be provided by Medical Corps from other forces.
- In the case of Defence Forces personnel assigned to longer term overseas administrative posts (e.g. EUMS, OSCE), these personnel are provided with full global comprehensive medical insurance for which a formal arrangement is in place with VHI. This involves the organisation paying the difference between a basic minimum payment and the cost of the global plan.

APPENDIX 10 - Summary of Defence Forces' pension regimes

Public Service Single Pension Scheme

Since 1 January 2013 all new entrants to the public service become members of the Public Service Single Pension Scheme (PSSPS), where benefits are based on career average earnings. While this is a public service-wide scheme, the Commission has noted that there are a number of key differences for military personnel compared to other public servants. One of the main differences relates to the minimum pension age that personnel qualify to receive full pension benefits; whereby Defence Forces personnel receive full benefits if they retire on, or after, 50 years of age. For other uniformed public servants, the minimum age is 55, while for non-uniformed public servants the age is the relevant state pension age. However, those who leave the Defence Forces before they are 50 have their pension benefits preserved, to be paid once they reach the relevant state pension age, unless they were retired on HR policy grounds, in which case they may claim their full pension benefits from age 60. All members of the PSSPS are also entitled to claim the Contributory State Pension from the relevant State pension age.

Public service employees who are forced to retire on age grounds earlier than public sector norms are generally referred to as the 'fast accrual' groups. Fast accrual groups include An Garda Síochána, the Prison Service, the Defence Forces and the Fire Services. Mandatory retirement at an earlier age is objectively justified on the grounds of the strenuous work undertaken in these professions, levels of physical fitness required and organisational medical standards.

Pre-2013 Pension Schemes

For those who joined the Defence Forces before April 2004, their pension scheme provides that benefits are payable immediately on retirement after set periods of service, regardless of age. Officers qualify for a pension after 12 years' service, with maximum benefits being accrued after 23 to 28 years' service, depending on rank. Enlisted personnel qualify for a pension after 21 years' service, with maximum benefits being accrued after 31 years' service.

Those who joined between April 2004 and December 2012 have a minimum pension age of 50, regardless of rank. Members of this scheme who retire before age 50 have their pension benefits preserved until they reach age 60. Benefits in this Scheme are pay-related and based on overall qualifying service, with maximum benefits reached at 30 years' service.

All Defence Forces personnel who joined after 6 April 1995, and all enlisted personnel who joined prior to that date, pay Class 'A' or Class H PRSI and so are entitled to claim the Contributory State Pension upon reaching the relevant State pension age.

APPENDIX 11 - Summary of the evolution of pay structures

Similar to other areas within the public service, the pay of the Defence Forces was reduced during the financial crisis. The reduction in pay was on a graduated basis with increased rates of deductions for those on higher earnings. This had a personal impact on all public servants, including members of the Defence Forces.

In 2016, the Government established the Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) to advise on Public Sector Pay. As part of that process, in early 2017 the Department of Defence submitted information that highlighted to the PSPC retention difficulties with regard to certain specialists within the Defence Forces. In its first report of May 2017, the PSPC highlighted recruitment and retention issues in the PDF, and certain other sectors, which merited further detailed examination.

As part of the subsequent Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 (published in June 2017), there was provision for the PSPC to examine and make recommendations on recruitment and retention issues in specific groups across the Public Service, which the PSPC Commission had identified in its 2017 Report, including the PDF and the health sector. The PSPC produced its report in May 2019 which was accepted by Government in July 2019. The PSPC recommendations were incorporated into a High Level Implementation Plan (HLIP) titled "Strengthening our Defence Forces – Phase 1" which was approved by Government. This plan had 15 discrete projects; seven of which relate to pay measures. Four of those were implemented immediately (while three further pay related projects are still being progressed) and these provided for:

- Increases in the Military Service Allowance;
- Restoration of cuts applied to a number of Defence Forces allowances under the Haddington Road Pay Agreement;
- Restoration of premium rates for weekend security duty allowances; and
- Restoration of a service commitment scheme for pilots.

In addition, further pay related measures, not related to the PSPC, that have been introduced include:

- The introduction of a sea-going tax credit for Naval Service personnel; and
- The introduction of a Sea-going Service Commitment Scheme for Naval Service personnel in January 2021.

The remuneration of members of the Defence Forces has traditionally been linked to the pay of civil servants. As a result, all ranks have, for many decades, received the general round pay increases granted to civil servants. In 1990, legislation was introduced which provided for the establishment of representative associations for PDF members to represent them in relation to remuneration and related matters. Subsequently, the

Representative Association for Commissioned Officers (RACO) and the Permanent Defence Forces Other Ranks Representative Association (PDFORRA) were established.

To compensate Defence Forces personnel for the special disadvantages associated with military life, Military Service Allowance (MSA) was first introduced for ranks up to Captain in 1979. This is an allowance in the nature of pay and, arising from a recommendation of the Gleeson Commission⁹², it was extended to all officers up to and including the rank of Colonel from 1990. The Gleeson Commission considered MSA as an integral part of salary and regarded the combination of line pay and MSA as making up what would generally be regarded as standard pay.

The current allowances structure has evolved to the extent that, including MSA, there are now a total of 23 and 33 different types of allowances payable to officers and enlisted personnel respectively. Details of these are listed in Appendix 12. A number of allowances are paid on a continuous basis to those carrying out certain duties or in certain posts, while others are paid on a per-duty basis. Personnel may be in receipt of a number of allowances at the same time. The complexity of the current structures is heightened by the fact that some allowances are pensionable and/or taxable, while others are neither.

⁹² Report of the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces, 31 July 1990.

APPENDIX 12 - Annualised salaries and allowances of Defence Forces personnel⁹³

Training Grades (4 pay scales): (post 2013 entrants)

Rank	Pay (Min-Max)
Cadet	€20,140
	€31,945
Apprentice	€16,389
	€29,354
Private Grade 1 Star/Seaman Third Class *	€22,387
Private Grade 2 Star/Seaman Second Class *	€26,129

* While these are annualised weekly salaries, it should be noted that Privates 1 and 2 Star do not spend a full year in training.

Enlisted Personnel/Non-Commissioned Officers (16 pay scales):

Rank	Post-2013 Entrant	Pre-2013 Entrant
	Basic Pay and MSA (Min-Max)	Basic Pay and MSA (Min-Max)
Private 3 Star/Seaman First Class	€29,854	€30,012
	€41,143	€39,630
Corporal/Leading Seaman	€42,025	€40,317
	€44,220	€42,088
Sergeant/Petty Officer	€45,246	€43,063
	€47,886	€45,571
CQMS/Senior Petty Officer	€51,438	€48,945
	€54,715	€52,059
Company Sergeant/Chief Petty Officer	€52,222	€49,690
	€55,497	€52,801
BQMS/Senior Chief Petty Officer	€55,965	€53,246
	€59,721	€56,801
Sergeant-Major/Warrant Officer	€57,217	€54,436
	€60,984	€57,989
Engine Room Artificers (ERA) Naval Service	€40,171	€38,549
	€44,220	€42,088

⁹³ With effect from 1 October 2021.

Commissioned Ranks (48 pay scales):

Officers and members of the Army Nursing Service who were recruited prior to 6 April 1995 are in PRSI Class C. All other Defence Forces personnel recruited prior to 6 April 1995 and all Defence Forces personnel recruited since that date are in PRSI Class A.

The commissioned ranks are divided into five differing pay rates, each with an associated non-PPC (Class C) and PPC (Class A) scales, as set out in the table below.

Pay Rate	
Pay Rate 1	Line Officers
Pay Rate 2	Engineer, Legal, Army School of Music, Executive Branch & Communications – Naval Service, Psychologists, and Military Analyst (Captain)
Pay Rate 3A	Medical Officers
Pay Rate 3B	Dental
Pay Rate 3C	Chemists

Rank	Class A		Class C	
	Basic Pay and MSA (Min-Max)		Basic Pay and MSA (Min-Max)	
Pay Rate 1				
Second-Lieutenant/Ensign	€38,219		€38,896	
	€41,830		€39,854	
Lieutenant/Sub-Lieutenant	€43,198		€42,994	
	€53,659		€51,088	
Captain/Lieutenant	€54,789		€52,171	
	€67,778		€64,485	
Commandant/Lieutenant Commander	€68,178		€64,859	
	€82,673		€78,539	
Lieutenant-Colonel/Commander	€81,487		€77,410	
	€90,372		€85,851	
Colonel/Captain	€93,060		€88,401	
	€111,935		€106,326	
Pay Rate 2				
Lieutenant/Sub-Lieutenant	€51,006		€51,033	
	€62,861		€59,813	
Captain/Lieutenant	€65,066		€61,915	
	€78,054		€75,282	
Commandant/Lieutenant Commander	€75,566		€72,904	
	€95,359		€90,587	
Lieutenant-Colonel/Commander	€95,642		€90,861	
	€104,855		€99,608	

Rank	Class A	Class C
	Basic Pay and MSA (Min-Max)	Basic Pay and MSA (Min-Max)
Colonel/Captain	€107,648	€102,260
	€127,186	€120,829
Pay Rate 3A (Medical Officers)		
Lieutenant/Sub-Lieutenant	€47,559	€47,669
	€58,335	€55,500
Captain/Lieutenant	€71,376	€71,671
	€87,767	€83,376
Commandant/Lieutenant Commander	€89,095	€84,638
	€204,929	€99,681
Lieutenant-Colonel/Commander	€105,750	€100,464
	€115,684	€109,887
Colonel/Captain	€117,602	€111,718
	€137,960	€131,052
Pay Rate 3B (Dental Officers)		
Lieutenant/Sub-Lieutenant	€47,559	€47,669
	€58,335	€55,500
Captain/Lieutenant	€67,403	€65,843
	€85,292	€81,026
Commandant/Lieutenant Commander	€86,593	€82,260
	€104,810	€99,566
Lieutenant-Colonel/Commander	€102,486	€97,361
	€109,799	€104,309
Pay Rate 3C (Chemist)		
Captain/Lieutenant	€65,474	€66,740
	€82,630	€78,490
Commandant/Lieutenant Commander	€78,915	€76,078
	€94,264	€89,578

General Ranks (6 pay scales)

Rank	Class A	Class C
	Pay	Pay
Brigadier-General/Commodore	€141,694	€134,609
Major-General/Rear Admiral	€155,862	€148,070
Lieutenant-General/Vice Admiral (Chief of Staff)	€202,219	€192,108

Army Nursing Service (14 pay scales):

The salary scales for the Army Nursing Service (ANS) are aligned to the HSE scales. ANS pay scales are divided into four groups, as set out below.

Grade	Pay (Min-Max)	Grade	Pay (Min-Max)	Grade	Pay (Min-Max)
General Nursing 1		General Nursing 2		Radiographer	
Matron (St Bricin's)	€68,448	Senior Dual Qualified Sister	€51,344	Senior Radiographer	€47,714
	€76,162				€55,281
Matron (Curragh & Cork)	€63,957	Dual Qualified Sister	€37,161	Radiographer	€39,369
	€74,356		€48,987		€51,934
Assistant Matron		Senior Sister	€49,711	Physiotherapists	
Assistant Matron	€56,174			Sister	€33,388
	€67,264	€47,431	€63,742		
Staff Sister	€58,585	Occupational Health Nurse	€50,912	Physiotherapist	€41,018
	€66,160				€60,190
Theatre Sister	€50,912				
	€60,190				

Chaplaincy Service (3 pay scales):

Rank	Pay (Min-Max)
Head Chaplain	€72,989
Chaplain in Charge	€63,008
	€70,217
Church of Ireland Clergyman	€18,673
	€20,574

Military Judge (1 pay scale):

Rank	Class A Basic Pay and MSA	Class C Basic Pay and MSA
Military Judge	€144,135	€136,923

Commissioned Ranks Allowances

Allowances divided by Class A or Class C:

Allowance	Value (Min-Max)	
	Class A	Class C
Annual Allowances		
Air Corps: Flying Pay – Pilots	€1,351	€1,278
	€18,067	€17,159
Air Corps: Flying Pay – Non-Pilots	€1,351	€1,278
Air Corps: Signal Corps	€1,351	€1,278
Air Corps: Air Traffic Control	€1,637	€1,553
	€15,403	€14,632
Army Medical Corps: Specialists’ Pay	€15,058	€14,305
Army Medical Corps: Assistant Surgeon	€2,015	€1,918
Army Medical Corps: O/C Military Hospital	€15,058	€14,305
Periodontist	€15,058	€14,305

Allowances not divided by Class A or Class C:

Allowance	Value (Min-Max)
Annual	
Chaplain’s Housekeepers	€1,986
Diving	€4,383
Foreign Language Proficiency	€974
	€2,923
Health & Safety	€5,138
	€6,818
Personnel Support Services	€2,609
	€5,219
Weekly	
Army Ranger Wing	€202

Allowance	Value (Min-Max)
Daily	
Brigade Duty Officer	€56.48
Diving Allowance	€53.07
Emergency Medical Officer	€83.23
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Duty	€100.14
Naval Service: In-Charge	€23.50
Maintenance of Essential Services	€51.31
	€102.76
Outpost	€14.41
Overseas Peace Support	€81.09
	€89.22
Overseas Armed Peace Support	€24.96
Patrol Duty	€59.45
SAR	€100.14
Security Duty – Portlaoise Prison	€85.00
Security Duty	€28.62
	€114.44

Enlisted Ranks Allowances

Allowance	Amount (Min-Max) Pre-2013 Entrant	Amount (Min-Max) Post-2013 Entrant
Annual		
Mast Rigger/Erector	€293.19	€308.61
Weekly		
Technician Pay 1	€8.60	€9.05

Allowance	Amount (Min-Max) Pre-2013 Entrant	Amount (Min-Max) Post-2013 Entrant
Technician Pay 2	€28.60	€30.11
Technician Pay 3	€42.98	€45.24
Technician Pay 4	€57.34	€60.35
Technician Pay 5	€85.85	€90.37
Technician Pay 6	€143.20	€150.73
Pay & Children's	€56.19	N/A
Instructors	€27.50	€28.95
Specialised Instructors	€101.23	€106.56
Assistant Stores Controller	€55.14	€58.04
NCO's Account Holders	€34.98	€36.82
	€69.95	€73.63
Naval Service: Fish Monitoring Centre	€8.53	€8.53
Foreign Language Proficiency	€18.64	€19.63
	€55.99	€58.94
Border Duty	€102.30	N/A
Army Ranger Wing	€202.00	€212.63
NCO Drivers 17 Bn Longford	€8.29	€8.29
Editors (Connect & An Cosantoir)	€32.80	N/A
Daily		
Flying Pay	€6.28	€6.61
	€6.52	€6.61
Naval Pay	€2.94	€3.09
Fire Protection Pay	€5.38	€5.67
Isolated Outpost	€14.62	€14.62

Allowance	Amount (Min-Max) Pre-2013 Entrant	Amount (Min-Max) Post-2013 Entrant
Patrol Duty	€56.70	€59.68
Naval Service: In-Charge	€13.23	€13.23
Aid to the Civil Authority	€52.90	€52.90
	€105.89	€105.89
Security Duty	€28.12	€29.60
	€112.47	€118.39
Security Duty – Portlaoise Prison	€84.37	€88.80
On-Call – Portlaoise Hospital Guard	€28.12	
	€56.22	
Explosive Ordnance Disposal	€98.41	
SAR	€95.51	N/A
Maintenance of Essential Services	€52.90	€52.90
	€105.89	€105.89
Naval Service: Diving	€26.80	€28.20
	€53.57	€56.39
Irish Language Teaching	€2.40	€2.53
	€3.15	€3.32
Army School of Music: Leading Instrumentalist	€2.40	N/A
Overseas Peace Support	€61.88	€61.88
	€66.29	€66.29
Overseas Armed Peace Support	€23.82	€23.82

APPENDIX 13 - Summary of non-pay benefits over and above basic pay and allowances

Pension benefits

PDF personnel are automatically members of a pension scheme, with three currently in operation. Membership of the individual schemes is dependent on the date members joined the public service.

The main pension benefits received in all three schemes consist of two aspects: an annual pension and a tax-free lump sum gratuity. Both the annual pension and the lump sum gratuity are, depending on scheme membership, calculated by a combination of earnings (either final salary or average career earnings) and the length of service provided. In addition, there are also death benefits and ill health provisions. There are also spouses and children's pensions and all PDF personnel joining after 1985 are automatically members of the spouses and children's pension scheme.

See Appendix 10 for further details.

Health Benefits

The unique nature of military service requires fit and healthy personnel as a crucial component of military capability. Health and welfare enablers are key to the development and maintenance of this capability. As such, a range of health and welfare provisions have evolved over the years that offer non-financial, or complementary, remuneration to members of the Defence Forces.

The full range of health services are set out in Appendix 9 and include provision of free primary and secondary medical care services (although different levels apply to officers compared to enlisted personnel). Also provided are a Personnel Support Service, access to messes/ canteens (including for family members), as well as accommodation and rationing.

Education and Training

Education and training are the cornerstone of military life and dictate the Defence Forces' operational capability and effectiveness both at home and overseas.

Apart from education and training opportunities provided through the Military College, and the individual schools focused on different specialities within the Defence Forces and accredited through the National Framework of Qualifications by appropriate higher education institutions, there are also a number of educational schemes available to Defence Forces personnel to attend civilian educational institutions.

Personnel who have completed their officer Cadet training and who have not previously obtained an Honours Bachelor Degree, or equivalent, may be assigned to a degree course at a third level college. The State will meet the related costs of this course and the officer

will remain in receipt of normal pay and certain allowances. Accommodation will also be provided in a military installation. However, officers who avail of this will have to serve for a minimum of two years per college year attended, or are required to refund the entire cost to the Exchequer, including pay and allowances received during their attendance at the course.

Physical Fitness Training, Sporting and Adventure Training Opportunities

The PDF supports physical development of all personnel across a wide spectrum of activities including physical fitness training, adventure training, and sport. In this context, as an integral part of the job, personnel are:

- as part of the daily routine, provided with time (where possible), facilities (e.g. gym or access to a local swimming pool) and expertise, from qualified instructors, to ensure maintenance of personal physical fitness;
- supported and provided with the facilities, equipment and time to engage in many forms of sports within barracks at unit level (everybody), at Brigade and DF level (for higher performers) and at International level (for elite performers); and
- supported and provided with the facilities, equipment, and time to participate in adventure training e.g. kayaking, sailing, parachuting, and mountaineering.

APPENDIX 14 - Calculation of the cost of LOA 2

A. LOA 2 – Equipment and Infrastructure (Capital)

Based on estimated costings provided by the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces, Table 1 below sets out the ten year approximation of likely capital costs associated with a step up to LOA 2. The final column provides the annualised approximation of these costs.

Table 1: 10 Year Equipment and Infrastructure costs

Domain	10 year Total Estimate (€m)	Annualised Estimate (€m)
Land	950	95.0
Maritime	594	59.4
Air	430	43.0
Joint/Cyber/SOF	80	8.0
Sub-total	2,054	205.4
Inflation @20%	411	41.1
Total	2,465	246.5

B. LOA 2 – Human Resources (Current)

Table 2 below sets out the annualised personnel costs of the estimated net additional personnel numbers that would be required to implement the changes recommended to make a step up to LOA 2.

Table 2: Annualised Cost of additional personnel

Domain	Estimated Numbers *	Estimated Cost (€m)	Estimated Additional Numbers per Service **
Land	200	12.000	700
Maritime	700	35.000	950
Air	100	5.000	350
Training Establishment	500	17.500	-
Joint/Cyber/SOF	500	33.190	-
Total	2,000	102.69	2,000

* These are indicative figures produced by the Commission, based on initial outline projections provided by the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces, for the purposes of calculating an approximate annualised cost of a step up to LOA 2.

** Additional Numbers per Service include the estimated numbers for each service in the second column plus a distribution of the joint staff numbers (training establishment and other joint) on the basis of a 50/25/25 ratio (Land/Maritime/Air). All of these figures are indicative.

Table 3 below contains the annualised estimated costs of the rank and pay structure changes recommended in Chapter 8.

Table 3: Annualised estimate of rank and pay structure changes

Personnel Cost Increases – Existing		
Change	Numbers	Cost (€m)
Lance Corporal Rank	841	0.742
Long Service Increments	2,000	2.087
Private Medical Cover	9,500	9.500
Removal of marking time for Private 3 Stars	1,500	1.976
MSA adjustment for Private 3 Stars	1,500	6.900
Total		21.205

C. Shortfall in LOA 1

At present, under LOA 1, additional annual estimated pay costs of some **€47m** would be required to meet the existing shortfall in strength versus establishment numbers. Regardless of a move to LOA 2, this would have to be funded under LOA 1 if the current baseline level of capital investment is to be maintained, alongside a full establishment of 9,500 personnel. Clearly, as part of a move to LOA 2, this current shortfall in LOA 1 would have to be met but, nevertheless, it is included here in order to identify the level of increased funding that will be required to move from current levels up to LOA 2.

D. Additional Current costs that would arise in LOA 2

Additional running and maintenance costs for new equipment and personnel is estimated to be a further **€40m** per annum, while the additional pension costs from the larger establishment would amount to approximately **€10m** extra per annum.

E. Total Estimates Annualised Increases

Table 4 below sets out the total annualised costs, capital and current, of making the step to LOA 2 and implement the recommendations as set out in Chapter 8.

Table 4: Total Estimated Annualised Costs

Capital/Current	Cost (€m)
Capital	246.500
Current	220.895
Total Estimated Increase of a move to LOA 2	467.395
Existing LOA 1*	1,032.000
Total LOA 2 Estimate	1,499.395

* Based on 2020 gross outturn

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACOS	-	Assistant Chief of Staff
AI	-	Artificial Intelligence
ANS	-	Army Nursing Service
APC	-	Armoured Personnel Carrier
AR	-	Army Reserve
ARW	-	Army Ranger Wing
ATCA	-	Aid to the Civil Authority
ATCP	-	Aid to the Civil Power
C2	-	Command and Control
CARD	-	Coordinated Annual Review of Defence
C&A	-	Conciliation and Arbitration
CBRN	-	Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear
CFR	-	Commissioning from the Ranks
CHOD	-	Chief of Defence
C-IEDD	-	Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Disposal
CIS	-	Communications and Information Systems
COS	-	Chief of Staff
COTS	-	Commercial off the Shelf
CSDP	-	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	-	Central Statistics Office
DCOS (Ops)	-	Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations)
DCOS (Sp)	-	Deputy Chief of Staff (Support)
DF	-	Defence Forces
DFHQ	-	Defence Forces Headquarters
DFTC	-	Defence Forces Training Centre
EAS	-	Emergency Aeromedical Support
ECM	-	Electronic Counter Measures
EDA	-	European Defence Agency
EDF	-	European Defence Fund
EDP	-	Equipment Development Plan
EDT	-	Emerging Disruptive Technology
EEAS	-	European External Action Service
EEZ	-	Exclusive Economic Zone
EOD	-	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EPF	-	European Peace Facility
ERU	-	Emergency Response Unit
ESST	-	Engineering Specialist Search Teams
EU	-	European Union
EU NAVFOR	-	European Union Naval Force

FLR	-	First Line Reserve
FMC	-	Fisheries Monitoring Centre
FOCNS	-	Flag Officer Commanding Naval Service
GASU	-	Garda Air Support Unit
GBAD	-	Ground Based Air Defence
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	-	General Data Protection Regulation
GENAD	-	Gender Advisor
GOC	-	General Officer Commanding
GNI	-	Gross National Income
HIQA	-	Health Information and Quality Authority
HLIP	-	High Level Implementation Plan
HLPPG	-	High Level Planning and Procurement Group
HQ	-	Headquarters
HR	-	Human Resources
HSE	-	Health Service Executive
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
ICTU	-	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IIEA	-	Institute for International and European Affairs
IGEES	-	Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service
IMG	-	Independent Monitoring Group
IPV	-	Inshore Patrol Vessel
IRCG	-	Irish Coast Guard
ISR	-	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
ISTAR	-	Intelligence, Surveillance, Target, Acquisition and Reconnaissance
IT	-	Information Technology
JEF	-	Joint Expeditionary Force
JFC	-	Joint Force Commander
JTF	-	Joint Task Force
LEGAD	-	Legal Advisor
LGBTQA	-	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies
LMDS	-	Leadership, Management and Defence Studies
LOA	-	Level of Ambition
LSI	-	Long Service Increment
MAOC-N	-	Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics
MARSUR	-	Maritime Surveillance
MATS	-	Ministerial Air Transport Service
ML	-	Machine Learning

MOTS	-	Military off the Shelf
MOU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
MRV	-	Multi-Role Vessel
MSA	-	Military Service Allowance
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCO	-	Non-Commissioned Officer
NSAC	-	National Security and Analysis Centre
NSR	-	Naval Service Reserve
NZ	-	New Zealand
ODF	-	Ombudsman for the Defence Forces
ONE	-	Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann
OPV	-	Off-Shore Patrol Vessel
OPCOM	-	Operational Command
OPCON	-	Operational Control
ORA	-	Office of Reserve Affairs
OSCE	-	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARP	-	PfP Planning and Review Process
PDA	-	Patrol Duty Allowance
PDF	-	Permanent Defence Forces
PDFORRA	-	Permanent Defence Forces Other Ranks Representative Association
PESCO	-	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PfP	-	Partnership for Peace
PMC	-	Private Military Companies
PRSI	-	Pay Related Social Insurance
PSPC	-	Public Service Pay Commission
PSSPS	-	Public Service Single Pension Scheme
RACO	-	Representative Association of Commissioned Officers
RAP	-	Recognised Air Picture
RDF	-	Reserve Defence Force
RDFRA	-	Reserve Defence Force Representative Association
RIA	-	Royal Irish Academy
RMP	-	Recognised Maritime Picture
RoW	-	Redress of Wrongs
RPAS	-	Remotely Piloted Aircraft System
RTI	-	Research, Technology and Innovation
R&T	-	Research and Technology
SAC	-	Strategic Airlift Capability
SAR	-	Search and Rescue
SatCom	-	Satellite Communication
SEAC	-	Senior Enlisted Adviser to CHOD

SFC	-	Single Force Concept
SFPA	-	Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
SIPRI	-	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLA	-	Service Level Agreement
SOCOM	-	Special Operations Command
SOF	-	Special Operations Forces
STANAG	-	Standardised Agreement
TACOM	-	Tactical Command
TACON	-	Tactical Control
TOR	-	Terms of Reference
TTS	-	Trainee Technician Scheme
T/PCC	-	Troop and Police Contributing Countries
UAV	-	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UCC	-	University College Cork
UCD	-	University College Dublin
UK	-	United Kingdom
UL	-	University of Limerick
UN	-	United Nations
UNDOF	-	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
UNIFIL	-	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
US	-	United States
WTE	-	Whole Time Equivalent
WMD	-	Weapons of Mass Destruction



Coimisiún um Óglaigh na hÉireann
Commission on the Defence Forces