

Establishment of a Review Group to examine the role of Sheriff

Terms of Reference

Sheriffs are appointed by Government under Section 12 of the Court Officers' Act, 1945. The purpose of this review is to:

- a. examine the future role of Sheriffs, as currently constituted, in respect of State work, with a view to establishing if the nature of the role is currently in line with best international practice, or if there is a more efficient and cost effective system of debt collection. The review will dissect the nature and volume of work available to Sheriffs both now, and into the future.
- b. review all aspects of the role of Sheriff and services provided in light of the Covid Pandemic, including implications for:
 - tax enforcement and debt collection on behalf of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners;
 - civil debt enforcement and fines collection on behalf of the Department of Justice;
 - Electoral/Returning Officer role on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; and
 - any other services or functions undertaken by Sheriffs on behalf of the State.
- c. provide a report on the volume and scale of business conducted by Sheriffs in each bailiwick; the amount of income generated for the State; the cost of maintaining operations, and fees charged; and consider whether value for money is obtained.
- d. consider the future viability of the role of Sheriff in relation to services provided for and on behalf of the State, and to identify any issues to be addressed including:
 - a. the nature of services to be delivered, and how they are delivered;
 - b. the extent to which debt collection can be modernised;
 - c. examine the potential for consolidating the Sheriff bailiwicks; and
 - d. implications for other ancillary services.
- e. make recommendations, and to identify the specific steps to be taken short, medium and long term to implement the proposed recommendations; and
- f. identify any legislative amendments required to implement such recommendations.

The Review Group will consult with Sheriffs, and may meet or make enquiries with any persons considered relevant to the review.

The Group will report to the Secretary General of the Department of Justice and the Chairman of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners in due course.