

LEO O'REILLY – PERMANENT SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND)

Leo O'Reilly became Permanent Secretary in the Department of the Environment (DOE) in August 2009.

In that role he has overall responsibility for delivery of the of the Department's programmes and policies as determined and directed by the Minister for the Environment.



The Department's responsibilities include all planning matters in Northern Ireland, including planning policies, area planning and the determination of all planning applications. The Department is also responsible for environment and heritage policies and the delivery of related programmes and enforcement activities through the NI Environment Agency. Other DOE responsibilities include local government, the delivery of vehicle and driver licensing and vehicle testing services and the promotion of road safety. The Department employs some 3,000 staff incorporating a diverse range of administrative, scientific, professional and technical and industrial grades working in a diverse range of areas and activities in all parts of Northern Ireland.

Prior to joining the Department of the Environment, Leo had been a Permanent Secretary in the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) since October 2007 where he was initially responsible for the strategic planning, management and control of public expenditure in Northern Ireland, the determination of financial accounting policy and practice for all NI Departments and agencies, public sector procurement policy and practice, and the provision of economic analysis and advice to Ministers and departments. He subsequently assumed responsibility for DFP's other activities including land and property services, the provision of corporate personnel policy and practice for the NI Civil Service (NICS), and the delivery of a significant corporate shared services programme for the NICS incorporating financial and accounting services, human resource management systems, IT systems and support, broadband network support systems and corporate staff training and development arrangements.

Leo had previously held a number of other posts in DFP since 1997 when he joined the Department as Head of Equal Opportunities and Appointments Division with responsibility for the development and implementation of recruitment and internal promotion policies and practice across the 26,000 strong NICS workforce, and for promoting and ensuring adherence to equal opportunities principles and requirements across all aspects of the civil service personnel systems and practices.

He was subsequently appointed Head of European Division in the Department in 2000 where he took on responsibility for the development and implementation of the European Union's structural funds programmes for Northern Ireland (1999 – 2006), including the PEACE II, Building Sustainable Prosperity and INTERREG programmes. In this role, Leo led the Northern Ireland negotiating teams with the European Commission, working alongside Irish Department of Finance officials on cross border programmes and with a wide range of social and economic partners.

Leo became Budget Director in DFP in 2002 where he continued to have responsibility for European structural funds programmes as well as for the overall strategic planning, management and control of public expenditure in Northern Ireland. In this role he led the oversight and co ordination of the 2004 and 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review exercises in Northern Ireland, and the preparation of the new Northern Ireland Executive's first three year Budget published in January 2008. As Budget Director he was also responsible for managing Northern Ireland's financial and fiscal relationships with HM Treasury and the European Commission, and with the Department of Finance in Dublin.

Prior to joining DFP, Leo had worked for 15 years in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) where he held a variety of posts, including latterly Director of Personnel and Director of Finance in the NI Prison Service.

Leo was born in Ballymena, Co Antrim and was educated at St MacNissis College Garron Tower and at Queens University Belfast where he graduated in Economic and Social History and Economics. He has completed post graduate Masters and Diploma programmes at the University of Ulster and at Warwick Business School in the areas of leadership, management, public policy and public finance. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

He is married with three children and lives in Belfast.
