

**OPW**The Office of Public Works
Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí

Ms. Niamh Maguire,
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Dear Ms. Maguire,

I refer to your letter dated 6th February 2014 requesting further information to be provided to the Committee members following my appearance before the Committee on 30th January for the examination of:

**2012 Annual Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General
Chapter 6: Land Swap Arrangement in the Provision of Affordable
Houses
Vote 13: Office of Public Works**

The responses to the Committees' queries are as follows:

- 1. A breakdown of how the figures of 'one person for 58 weeks' as provided for the cost employing professional services on the Irish-Jewish museum, was calculated. Details of the pay scales and the timeframe of the project to be included.**

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of the hours that have been recorded on this project. Other resources were engaged on occasions on this project but the input by those resources specific to this project were not recorded and are thus not included in these figures.

The current pay scales for all of the grades referred to below are included at Appendix 1.

Irish Jewish Museum – Summary of Recorded Hours										
Grade:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTALS:	
Architect					53.0	995.5	641.5	137.0	1827.0	(See note 1 below)
Quantity Surveyor	14.0		39.0		10.0	28.0			91.0	(See note 3 below)
Engineer – Grade 1					3.0	70.0	31.5	37.5	142.0	(See note 2 below)
Engineer – Graduate						3.0		7.0	10.0	(See note 2 below)
Principal Engineering Draughtsperson						9.0			9.0	(See note 2 below)
TOTAL									2079.0	

Note 1: Architectural Services = 1827 hrs @ 7hrs per day = 261 man days or 52+ weeks

Note 2: Civil & Structural Engineering Services = 161 hrs @ 7hrs per day = 23 man days = 4+ weeks

Note 3: Quantity Surveying Services = 91 hrs @ 7 hrs per day = 13 man days = 2+ weeks

Some of the OPW personnel who had been involved in supporting the Irish Jewish Museum in progressing with the design and planning process were available as required to assist the IJM through the Oral Appeal process i.e. to provide expert advice in accordance with their respective areas of responsibility. Those hours are not included in the figures above.

2 A note on the cost to the state of Carrisbrook House, Dublin 4 including the options that arose when that building came up for sale

I refer to correspondence sent to the Committee in November, 2013 by the Chief Executive of Forfas which outlined the costs to the State and other relevant background information. At this point, I have no further update for the Committee.

3. A copy of any Value for Money reports and Policy review reports, paid in 2012 from subhead A7 and a note on the costs associated with each review.

There were no Value for Money reports paid for in 2012 from subhead A7. Most of the expenditure in 2012 was in relation to consultancy on Records Management (€7k).

4. A note on the payment of €6m in tax and VAT as contained in note 2.9 of the account

The amount of €6.003m due to the State at the end of the 2012 financial year was made up of:

	€000
VAT	3,035
PAYE/PRSI/Income Levy	1,850
Professional Services Withholding Tax	757
Pension Contributions	191
Sale of State Property	162
Local Loans	8

These amounts relate to taxes withheld or receipts collected by the Office which were on hand at financial year end.

5. A note on the need to re-employ 12 retired civil servants at a cost of €198,790 in 2012

The following is a list of the grades retained, the reason for retention of the staff member and the costs involved

Grade	No. retained	Reason for retention	Cost €
Principal Officer	2	To complete an investigation under the Civil Service Disciplinary Code. Completion of Projects.	68,127.28
District Inspector	2	Pending the filling of vacancies which was critical in these regional reactive maintenance positions. The competition was underway and has since been completed.	33,844.60
Chief Technical Officer	1	To facilitate the transfer of particular knowledge and expertise in the procurement area.	12,009.77
Senior Architect	2	In order to complete projects near finalisation and pending the filling of vacancies. The competition was underway and has since been completed.	31,506.62
Architectural Assistant	1	In order to complete a project near finalisation.	16,520.97
Forrester	1	Finishing works relating to JFK Memorial Project.	14,922.21
Engineering	1	Pending the filling of a critical vacancy. The	17,244.92

Technician		competition was underway at the time and is now complete.	
Architectural Assistant	1	In order to complete background research, the writing of historical research and the design of layouts for interpretative panels at various sites.	3,200
HEO	1	In order to complete a project near finalisation.	1,413.93
Total Cost			198,790.30

Members of the Committee will recall that under the Public Service or Croke Park Agreement, certain commitments were made to serving public servants to facilitate the reduction in cost and the number of people working in the Public Service. As part of this, an extension of the period within which the January 2010 pay reductions were disregarded for the purposes of calculating pensions meant that a number of civil servants opted for retirement under these arrangements in the period up to February 2012. In a small number of cases, OPW made arrangements in 2012 to ensure continuity, so that projects were completed and were not adversely affected by these circumstances.

6. A breakdown of the expenditure provided for Agency Services, which amounted to €79m in 2012.

Non-voted expenditure of €79m on agency services in 2012 was broadly as follows:

	€m
Capital Works	29
Maintenance	21
Provision of Accommodation	17
Local Loans	7
Miscellaneous	5

7. A note on the transfer of responsibility of procurement from the OPW to the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) including:

- a. a note on costs of replacing office equipment
- b. a comparison of the cost of printing per copy between the old and new system.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) have provided me with material in response to queries raised - see Appendix 2. The OGP now form part of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

8. A list of the areas that benefited from the €15.5 million provided for maintenance under the urban flood relief scheme

The €15.5 million euros refers to monies expended on the maintenance of drainage schemes across the country undertaken by the Commissioners of Public Works who have a duty to maintain them under Section 37 of The Arterial Drainage Act, 1945 and its amendments. Most of the expenditure was spent on maintaining the 39 arterial drainage schemes and the estuarine embankment schemes under our care. A small proportion was spent on the 13 urban flood relief schemes that have been transferred into maintenance. The schemes drawing on the Maintenance allocation are spread across 24 of the 26 counties (only Carlow and Wicklow have no schemes).

9. A note on the history of the OPW book including:

- a. The costs involved to date
- b. Areas where value has been achieved
- c. The procurement involved
- d. The current status of the project

The above was addressed in the Comptroller & Auditor General Report published in 2010. Since the last report to the Committee in 2010 the additional costs incurred were €32,947.37, which was the total amount spent in 2011 associated with publishing the book: *St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 1660-1875*. The book is available to purchase at a cost of €35 and to-date 740 copies have been sold.

No further costs have been incurred since 2011.

10. A note on the current situation regarding the sale of Garda Stations including;

- a. A list of all the stations that have been sold to date and the price achieved for each sale
- b. A list of the remaining Garda stations intended to be sold
- c. A list of the stations which were sold and intend to be sold for community purposes

Please see response attached at Appendix 3.

11. A list of state heritage sites and their associated values

A total of 780 heritage sites are under the care of the Office of Public Works and are attached at Appendices 4A and 4B. Historic Properties and National Monuments are not, as a rule, valued in market terms in the Appropriation Account.

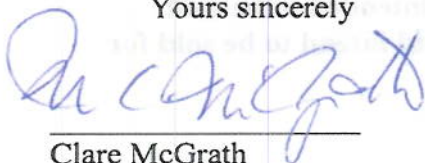
12. A note on the funding for flood relief projects to Local Authorities in 2012 and 2013.

The Minor Flood Mitigation Works & Coastal Protection Scheme was introduced by the Office of Public Works in 2009 to provide funding to local authorities to undertake minor flood mitigation works and coastal protection measures or studies within their administrative areas. The Scheme generally applies to relatively straightforward cases where a solution can be readily identified and achieved in a short time frame.

Under the Scheme, applications are considered for projects that are estimated to cost not more than €500,000 in each instance. Funding of up to 90% of the cost is available for approved projects, with the balance being funded by the local authority concerned. Exceptionally, funding may be provided in advance of the expected completion of works where a case is made justifying this course. Where a contract has been signed, up to 80% of funding may be provided in advance.

Local authorities submit funding applications in the prescribed format, which are then assessed by the OPW having regard to the specific technical, economic, social and environmental criteria of the Scheme, including cost benefit ratio. With regard to the latter, proposals must meet a minimum benefit to cost ratio of 1.5:1 in order to qualify. Works that would be the responsibility of a local authority, or for which funding is available from other state bodies, are not generally be considered for funding. €4.75m was the total for the scheme in 2012 with another €0.14m being spent by OPW on undertaking some works directly for Local Authorities under the Scheme. €2.28m was the total for the Scheme in 2013 with another €0.2m being spent on undertaking some works directly for Local Authorities under the Scheme. See attached at Appendices 5A and 5B for breakdown of expenditure.

Yours sincerely



Clare McGrath
Chairman

28th February 2014.