



An Roinn Iompair  
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt

Department of Transport,  
Tourism and Sport

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Meeting 139 23/10/14

Ms Margaret Falsey  
Committee Secretariat  
Committee of Public Accounts  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

Dear Ms Falsey

I refer to your letter of 8 October regarding the Committee's meeting on 2 October which examined the 2012 Annual Accounts of the Irish Sports Council.

I have set out below the further information that this Department undertook to provide to the Committee during the course of this meeting in relation to the following issues:

1. A note on the premises being leased by the OPW in Blanchardstown which is part-occupied by the Irish Sports Council to include the length left on the lease and ownership of the building.
2. A note on the consideration that was given to hosting the World Equestrian Games in Ireland.
3. A note on the importation of horses into Ireland and the subsequent marking of points on passports.

### 1. Lease on Irish Sports Council premises

The Irish Sports Council (ISC) occupy approximately 7,500 square feet in Block A, West End Office Park, Blanchardstown since March 2004. The Commissioners of Public Works (OPW) hold a 25 year lease on the building which expires in May 2025. The OPW has advised me that the Landlord of this building is Cosgrave Property Group, 15 Hogan Place, Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2.

The ISC pay rent of €153,857.60 per annum and service charges of approximately €6,600 per annum (variable) to the OPW. They are also responsible for their own utility costs.

As is normally the case when buildings leased by OPW are occupied by other State bodies, there is no sub lease in place between the OPW and the ISC. The terms and conditions governing their occupancy of the building were agreed through discussions and correspondence. The ISC may terminate their occupancy by giving 12 months written notice to the OPW or by agreement between the parties.

### 2. World Equestrian Games

Responsibility for bidding to host the World Equestrian Games rests with the relevant national governing body, in this case Horse Sport Ireland (HSI). Consideration was given by HSI in 2008 to making an application to host the 2014 World Equestrian Games. However, following consideration of the matter at board level, HSI decided not to proceed with the bid. I am aware of some informal discussions which took place at the end of 2013 and early this year regarding the possibility of Ireland staging the games but as I have outlined this is a matter in the first instance for HSI.

### **3. Importation of horses into Ireland and the marking of points on passports**

Showjumping Ireland (SJI) is an independent sporting organisation and is an affiliate organisation of Horse Sport Ireland (HSI), the governing body for equestrian sport in Ireland. SJI's aim is to encourage the holding of show jumping events in Ireland which provide good sport, fair competition and fellowship for those people with an interest in the horse.

SJI facilitate the performance testing of horse through the show jumping events that are held throughout the country. Performance points are allocated to each competing horse on the basis of their success in these competitions and merit of horses is judged on points that are accumulated over time.

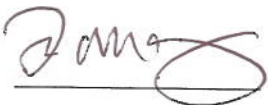
There has been a complication however with imported horses and in particular their merit assessment in the absence of performance records. Rule 3.5.2 of the SJI Rulebook is an attempted to address this issue and states that "horses coming in from abroad with no proven record of points/winnings will be assessed as at least Grade C and awarded appropriate points (minimum 76 points)".

The above rule was raised at the Stakeholder Consultation Meetings as part of the HSI, Teagasc and RDS initiative to develop a 10-year strategy for the sport horse sector, that was attended by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney TD. The point was made that a stallion with little or no performance could be imported and awarded 76 SJ points on registration with SJI and retired to stud in Ireland without competing here.

The SJI are aware of the views of stakeholders on the issue and it is understood that their National Competitions Committee will consider changes to this rule at a meeting in 2-3 weeks. SJI advise that any rule changes must be agreed by the third week of November for implementation by 1 January 2015. The Department will follow up with HSI on the decision made by SJI on this issue at the upcoming meeting and revert to the Committee.

I hope this information will be of assistance to the Committee. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Tom O'Mahony  
Secretary General