

**COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 11 APRIL, 2019**

The Committee met in **Public Session** at 09.15 a.m. in Committee Room 3, LH 2000, a quorum being present.

The following members were present:-

**Deputies:** Sean Fleming; Bobby Aylward; Shane Cassells; Catherine Connolly; Marc MacSharry; Catherine Murphy; Jonathan O’Brien; and Kate O’Connell.

**Apologies** from Deputies Pat Deering and David Cullinane.

Also present:

Seamus McCarthy – Comptroller and Auditor General

Niamh Donegan – Senior Auditor

**1. Minutes of the Meetings of:**

04 April 2019

Agreed and agreed to publish.

**2. Matters Arising**

No matters arising.

<b>3. Correspondence received</b>		
<b>A - Briefing documents and opening statements</b>		<b>Decision</b>
32R002095-PAC	Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, dated 08/04/2019	Note and Publish.
32R002100-PAC	Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, dated 10/04/2019	Note and Publish.
32R002096-PAC	Professor Chris Fitzpatrick, dated 09/04/2019	Note and Publish.
32R002097-PAC	Central Statistics Office, dated 09/04/2019	Note and Publish.
32R002098-PAC	Central Statistics Office, dated 09/04/2019	Note and Publish.
<b>B - Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings</b>		<b>Decision</b>
32R002083-PAC	Jennifer Wiley, HEO, Seafood Policy and Management Division, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 02/04/2019	Note and Publish.

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<b>3. Correspondence received</b>		
32R002086-PAC	Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 03/04/2019	Note and Publish. Request a timescale in relation to the improvement of cost estimations; and a note on the assessment process to determine whether a project meets the value for money criteria to include how this is integrated into the approval process for any major projects.
32R002087-PAC	Maurice Quinn, Secretary General, Department of Defence, dated 03/04/2019	Note and Publish. Send to original correspondent who raised the matter.
32R002091-PAC	Mark O'Mahoney, Commissioner, The Tax Appeals Commission, dated 05/04/2019	Note and Publish. Request an information note from Revenue in relation to the closed cases referenced in correspondence no. 2060 to include the final agreed figure and the date on which the monies were paid or will be paid.
32R002092-PAC	Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, Health Service Executive, dated 27/03/2019	Note and Publish.
<b>C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence</b>		<b>Decision</b>
32R001875-PAC	Correspondence received, dated 22/01/2019	Noted.
32R002088-PAC	Correspondence received, dated 30/03/2019	Noted. Advise correspondent they may also bring the matter to the attention of the Local Government Audit Service.

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<b>3. Correspondence received</b>		
32R002089-PAC	Correspondence received, dated 05/04/2019	Noted. Request update on review of System for setting nursing home prices under the Nursing Home Support Scheme from National Treatment Purchase Fund.
32R002090-PAC	Correspondence received, dated 05/04/2019	Noted.

**4. Accounts and Statements received since the meeting of the 04 April 2019**

Ref	Body/main purpose	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date received	Audit opinion/notes
4.1	<b>Medical Bureau of Road Safety</b>	2017 €5 million	12 Dec 2018	28 Mar 2019	Clear audit opinion
4.2	<b>Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board (Caranua)</b> Total fund value at year end 2017 was €27 million	2017 €17 million	20 Dec 2018	29 Mar 2019	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to ongoing weaknesses in the Board's control over grant payments.
4.3	<b>National College of Art and Design</b>	2016/2017 €16.8 million	21 Dec 2018	1 Apr 2019	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to - the College's disclosure that it was not fully in compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, and the actions being taken to address this - the College incurred a deficit for the year of €444,000 and had an accumulated deficit of €1m at 30 Sep 2017.
4.4	<b>Legal Aid Board</b>	2017 €41.8 million	20 Dec 2018	4 Apr 2019	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to non-compliant procurement.
4.5	<b>Inland Fisheries Ireland</b>	2017 €31.8 million	18 Dec 2018	4 Apr 2019	Clear audit opinion

**5. Work Programme**

Work programme agreed.

**6. Any other business**

Deputy Marc MacSharry raised matters in relation to the Chair's ruling that questions put by the Deputy at the meeting of 04 April 2019 in relation to the Irish Prison Service were not on behalf of the

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Committee. Following discussion in which the Chair outlined his rationale, Deputy MacSharry stated that he would be pursuing the matter with the Committee on Procedures.

The Committee suspended at 10.30 a.m. to allow witnesses to take their seats.

The Committee went into in **public session** at 10.43 a.m.

## **7. Witnesses Examined**

### **Session 1**

#### **Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General**

- Seamus McCarthy, Comptroller and Auditor General
- Mark Brady, Deputy Director of Audits

#### **Central Statistics Office**

- Pádraig Dalton, Director General
- Maria Hurley, Assistant Director General
- Jennifer Banim, Assistant Director General
- Richard McMahon, Assistant Director General

#### **Matters for discussion**

- Appropriation Accounts 2017
  - Vote 4 – Central Statistics Office

The Committee suspended at 11.48 a.m. to allow witnesses from Office of Comptroller and Auditor General to take their seats.

The Committee went into in **public session** at 11.52a.m.

### **Session 2**

#### **Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (as auditor)**

- Seamus McCarthy, Comptroller and Auditor General
- Bernard Barron, Partner, Mazars

#### **Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (in relation to Vote 8)**

- Colette Drinan, Accounting Officer, Secretary and Director of Audit
- Andrew Harkness, Director of Audit
- Mairead Leyden, Senior Auditor

#### **Matters for discussion**

- Appropriation Accounts 2017
  - Vote 8 - Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

The Committee suspended at 12.30 p.m.

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The Committee went into in **public session** at 15.00 p.m.

**Session 3**

- Professor Chris Fitzpatrick

**Matters for discussion**

- Matters relating to 2017 Financial Statements, National Paediatric Hospital Development Board

It was agreed to request the Clerk to seek any agreed follow-up information and carry out any agreed actions arising from the meeting.

**8. Adjournment**

The Committee adjourned at 16.15 p.m. until 18 April 2019.

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Sean Fleming, T.D  
Chairman  
18 April 2019