

COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 04 JULY, 2019

The Committee met in **Public Session** at 09.11 a.m. in Committee Room 3, LH 2000, a quorum being present.

The following members were present:-

Deputies: Sean Fleming; Peter Burke; Catherine Connolly; David Cullinane; Alan Kelly; Marc MacSharry; Catherine Murphy; Jonathan O’Brien; and Kate O’Connell.

Apologies from Deputies Shane Cassells; Pat Deering; and Alan Farrell.

Also present:

Mr. Seamus McCarthy – Comptroller and Auditor General

Mr. Brian Hill – Deputy Director of Audit

1. Minutes of the Meetings of:

20 June 2019 and 27 June 2019

Not circulated.

2. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

| 3. Correspondence received | | |
|---|---|---|
| A - Briefing documents and opening statements | | Decision |
| 32R002293-PAC | Conor O’Kelly, CEO, NTMA, dated 02/07/2019 | Note and Publish. |
| 32R002297-PAC | Martin Whelan, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, NTMA, dated 03/07/2019 | Note and Publish. |
| 32R002296-PAC | Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, Health Service Executive, dated 03/07/2019 | Note and Publish. |
| B - Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings | | Decision |
| 32R002161-PAC | Paul O’Toole, Chief Executive Officer, The Higher Education Authority, dated 10/05/2019 | Previously Noted and Published. |
| 32R002277-PAC | Mary Lawlor, Communications and Public Affairs Manager, NAMA, dated 26/06/2019 | Note and Publish. |
| 32R002284-PAC | Maurice Buckley, Chairman, Office of Public Works, dated 27/06/2019 | Note and Publish. Request an update for September. |
| 32R002291-PAC | Fergal Lynch, Secretary General, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, dated 01/07/2019 | Note and Publish. Ask the department to provide information in accordance with the proposal in their correspondence. |

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| 3. Correspondence received | | |
|--|---|---|
| 32R002292-PAC | Marie Mulvihill, Health Vote, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 28/06/2019 | Note and Publish. Write to the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform in relation to female representation on state boards. |
| 32R002294-PAC | Crónan Goodman, Private Secretary to the Secretary General, Office of the Secretary General, Department of Justice and Equality, dated 02/07/2019 | Note and Publish. |
| 32R002295-PAC | William Beausang, Head of Higher and Further Education and Training Policy, Department of Education and Skills, dated 28/06/2019 | Note and Publish. |
| C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence | | Decision |
| 32R002260-PAC | Correspondence received, dated 18/06/2019 | Noted. Advise correspondent that consideration of the matter by the Committee is now closed. |
| 32R002279-PAC | Correspondence received, dated 27/06/2019 | Noted. Advise correspondent that they may wish to contact the Local Government Audit Agency. |
| 32R002280-PAC | Correspondence received, dated 24/06/2019 | Noted. |
| 32R002281-PAC | Correspondence received, dated 24/06/2019 | Noted. Advise correspondent the matter is not within the remit of the Committee and they should make their enquiry to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government. |
| 32R002283-PAC | Correspondence received, dated 27/06/2019 | Noted. Forward correspondence to the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure, Reform and Taoiseach for their consideration and any action they deem appropriate. |

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| 3. Correspondence received | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 32R002285-PAC | Correspondence received, dated 27/06/2019 | Noted. Write to the OPW and AGS re health and safety standards and specifications in relation to the supply and fitting of cell windows. Write to Health & Safety Authority for an update on the matter. |
| 32R002289-PAC | Correspondence received, dated 27/06/2019 | Noted. |
| 32R002290-PAC | Correspondence received, dated 27/06/2019 | Noted. |

4. Accounts and Statements received since the meeting of the 27 June 2019

| Ref | Body/main purpose | Accounting period/turnover | Date certified | Date received | Audit opinion/notes |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|---|
| 4.1 | University College Cork | 30 Sep 2017 €374 million | 2 Apr 2019 | 24 Jun 2019 | Qualified audit opinion in relation to The University recognises a deferred funding asset in respect of future pension liabilities (standard for universities). However, it has recognised €3.75 million more than is warranted in relation to a funding agreement it entered with the HEA. Otherwise, the financial statements give a true and fair view. On a separate point, it is noted that the University had non-compliant procurement to the value of €2.9 million in 2016/2017. |
| 4.2 | Commission for Communications Regulation | 30 June 2018 €87 million | 29 Mar 2019 | 25 Jun 2019 | Clear audit opinion |
| 4.3 | IDA Ireland | 31 Dec 2018 €184 million | 31 May 2019 | 25 Jun 2019 | Clear audit opinion |
| 4.4 | Digital Hub Development Agency <i>Provides operating space for start-up businesses in digital media, technology and internet.</i> | 31 Dec 2017 €4.3 million | 19 Dec 2018 | 28 Jun 2019 | Clear audit opinion |

Agreed.

It was agreed to write to the HEA in relation to employment contracts in universities.

5. Work Programme

Work Programme agreed.

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6. Any other business

The Committee suspended at 09.42 a.m. to allow witnesses to take their seats.

The Committee went into in **public session** at 09.49 a.m.

7. Witnesses Examined

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

- Mr. Seamus McCarthy, Comptroller and Auditor General
- Mr. Brian Hill, Deputy Director of Audit

National Treasury Management Agency

- Mr. Conor O’Kelly, CEO
- Mr. Ian Black, Chief Financial and Operating Officer
- Ms. Sinead Brennan, Director of Human Resources, Organisational Development and Learning

State Claims Agency

- Mr. Ciarán Breen, Director, State Claims Agency (SCA)
- Ms. Catherine Tarrant, SCA Executive Head of Claims, Clinical Indemnity Scheme

Health Service Executive

- Mr. Patrick Lynch, National Director, Quality Assurance and Verification
- Ms. Mairead Dolan, Assistant Chief Financial Officer

Department of Health

- Mr. Greg Dempsey, Deputy Secretary, Governance & Performance

Department of Finance

- Mr. Eoin Dorgan, Principal Officer, Department of Finance

Matters for discussion

- Session 1: NTMA Financial Statements 2018
- Session 2: The State Claims Agency

The Committee suspended at 12.00 p.m.

The Committee resumed in **public session** at 12.18 p.m.

The Committee suspended at 14.25 p.m.

The Committee went into in **public session** at 15.03 a.m.

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

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8. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 16.04 p.m. until 11 July 2019.

Sean Fleming, T.D
Chairman
11 July 2019