

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2020

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 4:30 p.m. in the Committee Room 3, a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

Deputies: Brian Stanley (Chairman); Colm Burke; Matt Carthy; Cormac Devlin; Alan Dillon; Paul McAuliffe; Marc MacSharry; Imelda Munster; Catherine Murphy; Verona Murphy.

Permanent

Witness: Comptroller and Auditor General, Mr. Seamus McCarthy.

Apologies: Neasa Hourigan; Seán Sherlock.

The Committee went into **private** session at 4:32 p.m.

Correspondence dealt with in Private session

Ref No.	Details	Decision
R0196 PAC33	Correspondence dated 06/11/2020	It was agreed to write to the University of Limerick and to request clarification from the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser on a related matter.

It was agreed to circulate a draft report in relation to engagements on the Nursing Homes Support Scheme, (Fair Deal Scheme) for consideration at the first private session in 2021.

The Committee resumed in **public** session at 5:22 p.m.

1. Minutes of Meetings 02.12.2020, 09.12.2020 and 10.12.2020.

Agreed.

2. Correspondence

3. Correspondence received		
A - Briefing documents and opening statements		Decision
R0244 PAC33	Correspondence received from Crónan Goodman, Private Secretary to the Secretary General, Dept. of Justice, dated 03/12/2020	At the meeting on 9 December 2020 it was agreed to note and publish this item.
R0245 PAC33	Correspondence received from Crónan Goodman, Private Secretary to the Secretary General, Dept. of Justice, dated 03/12/2020	At the meeting on 10 December 2020 it was agreed to note and publish this item.
R0251 PAC33	Correspondence received from Aidan O'Driscoll, Secretary General, Department of Justice, dated 08/12/2020	At the meeting on 9 December 2020 it was agreed to note and publish this item.

3. Correspondence received		
R0255 PAC33	Correspondence received from Crónan Goodman, Private Secretary to the Secretary General, Irish Prison Service, dated 09/12/2020	At the meeting on 10 December 2020 it was agreed to note and publish this item.
R0262 PAC33	Correspondence received from Jane Merrigan, Head of Communications & Engagement, Caranua, dated 10/12/2020	At the meeting on 17 December 2020 it was agreed to note and publish this item.
B - Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		
R0222 PAC33	Correspondence received from Liam McGrath, Acting Chief Executive, Tipperary Education Training Board, dated 27/11/2020	Note and publish.
R0223 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 27/11/2020	Note and publish. It was agreed to Inform the HSE that matters related to this correspondence and non-compliant procurement may be raised when their 2019 financial statement is being examined by the Committee, and that they should be prepared to answers questions related to this issue. It was also agreed to request that the HSE's Head of Procurement attend the meeting.
R0224 PAC33	Correspondence received from Kerstin Mey, President, University of Limerick, dated 30/11/2020	Note and publish.
R0225 PAC33	Correspondence received from John O'Halloran, Interim President, University College Cork, dated 30/11/2020	Note and publish.
R0227 PAC33	Correspondence received from Brian Murphy, Director of Organisation Support and Development, Louth and Meath Education and Training Board, dated 30/11/2020	Note and publish.
R0228 PAC33	Correspondence received from Aine Carroll, Director of Corporate and Communication Services, Financial Services and Ombudsman, dated 30/11/2020	Note and publish.
R0229 PAC33	Correspondence received from John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 30/11/2020	Note and publish.
R0230 PAC33	Correspondence received from Rhona Kelly, Chief Executive, Dublin Education and Training Board, dated 01/12/2020	Note and publish.
R0231 PAC33	Correspondence received from Tom Grady, Chief Executive, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim ETB, dated 30/11/2020	Note and publish.
R0232 PAC33	Correspondence received from Kevin Lewis, Chief Executive, Waterford and Wexford ETB, dated 01/12/2020	Note and publish.

3. Correspondence received		
R0233 PAC33	Correspondence received from Colm McGinty, Secretary, Sport Ireland, dated 01/12/2020	Note and publish. It was agreed to hold over this item for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee at which correspondence is considered.
R0234 PAC33	Correspondence received from Caitriona Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB, dated 18/11/2020	Note and publish.
R0237 PAC33	Correspondence received from David FitzPatrick, President, Technological University Dublin, dated 01/12/2020	Note and publish.
R0238 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ann Marie O'Grady, Chief Executive, Leopardstown Park Hospital, dated 01/12/2020	Note and publish.
R0239 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deirdre Keyes, Chief Executive, Kildare and Wicklow ETB, dated 02/12/2020	Note and publish.
R0243 PAC33	Correspondence received from George O'Callaghan, Chief Executive, Limerick and Clare ETB, dated 01/12/2020	Note and publish.
R0246 PAC33	Correspondence received from Andrew J. Deeks, President, UCD, dated 03/12/2020	Note and publish. Request a breakdown of the non-compliant procurement to the value of €3.9 million (as originally requested by the Committee).

3. Correspondence received		
R0247 PAC33	Correspondence received from Maurice Buckley, Chairman, Office of Public Works, dated 04/12/2020	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - further details in relation to the process for awarding contracts and a further update in relation to Miesian Plaza. - a note on historic outsourcing of work by the OPW, including contractors, durations and award processes. - information on the building status and timeline for development in relation to Hawkins House and whether funding has been secured to develop it, and - further information in relation to the five environmental procedures that must be completed prior to commencement of the Mountmellick flood relief scheme.
R0248 PAC33	Correspondence received from Fergal Costello, Government Accounting Unit, Dept. of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 07/12/2020	Note and publish.
R0249 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ted McEnery, Clerk, The Committee on Health, The Houses of the Oireachtas Service, dated 07/12/2020	Noted.
R0250 PAC33	Correspondence received from Sean O Fearghail, Ceann Comhairle, Office of the Ceann Comhairle, dated 02/12/2020	Note and publish.
R0252 PAC33	Correspondence received from Anne Graham, Chief Executive Officer, National Transport Authority, dated 26/11/2020	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to hold over this item for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee at which correspondence is considered.</p>
R0253 PAC33	Correspondence received from John Dollard, Chief Superintendent, An Garda Síochána, dated 08/12/2020	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to hold over this item for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee at which correspondence is considered.</p>

3. Correspondence received		
R0254 PAC33	Correspondence received from Bernard Gloster, Chief Executive, TUSLA, dated 08/12/2020	Note and publish. It was agreed to hold over this item for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee at which correspondence is considered.
R0256 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ciaran O hOgartaigh, President, NUI Galway, dated 07/12/2020	Note and publish.
R0257 PAC33	Correspondence received from Nick Ashmore, CEO, SBCI, dated 09/12/2020	Note and publish. It was agreed to hold over this item for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee at which correspondence is considered.
R0258 PAC33	Correspondence received from Lindsey Brady, Personal Assistant to the Chairman, Office of Public Works, dated 09/12/2020	Noted.
R0260 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 10/12/2020	Note and Publish. It was agreed to hold over this item for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee at which correspondence is considered.
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R0226 PAC33	Correspondence received, dated 30/11/2020	It was agreed to reiterate that the Committee cannot meaningfully address the concerns raised and advise the correspondent that the matters raised are not within the Committee's remit and that further correspondence will not be circulated to the Committee.
R0235 PAC33	Correspondence received, dated 02/12/2020	As per R0226 PAC33.
R0236 PAC33	Correspondence received, dated 02/12/2020	It was agreed to reiterate a request to NAMA to copy the Committee on its response to this latest item of correspondence, and to advise the correspondent accordingly.
R0240 PAC33	Correspondence received, dated 30/11/2020	The request was acceded to and the correspondent was advised accordingly.

3. Correspondence received		
R0241 PAC33	Correspondence received, dated 10/12/2020	It was agreed to advise the correspondent that the matter is not within the remit of the Committee and suggest that he might wish to contact the Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment or the Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform and Taoiseach in relation to the matters raised.
R0242 PAC33	Correspondence received, dated 02/12/2020	It was agreed to advise the correspondent that the matter is not within the remit of the Committee and suggest that the correspondent might wish to contact the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) in relation to this matter.

3. Financial Statements & Accounts Received

Ref	Body/main purpose	Accounting period/ turnover	Date certified	Date laid	Audit opinion/notes
1	University of Limerick	2018/2019 €279 million	25 Sep 2020	26 Nov 2020	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of a deferred retirement benefit funding asset (standard for universities) • Significant non-compliant procurement
2	Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board (Caranua) <i>[Note: accounts originally laid without audit certificate on 13 Nov 2020.]</i>	2019 €8.3 million	6 Aug 2020	27 Nov 2020	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to disclosure of inadequate control over grant repayments
3	National Disability Authority <i>Advises on disability policy and practice</i>	2019 €5 million	22 Sep 2020	1 Dec 2020	Clear audit opinion

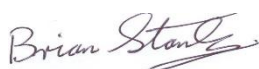
Ref	Body/main purpose	Accounting period/ turnover	Date certified	Date laid	Audit opinion/notes
4	Ombudsman for Children's Office	2019 €2.3 million	30 Sep 2020	1 Dec 2020	Clear audit opinion
5	An Bord Bia	2019 €79 million	30 Jun 2020	1 Dec 2020	Clear audit opinion
6	Commission for Aviation Regulation	2019 €4.4 million	25 Sep 2020	2 Dec 2020	Clear audit opinion
7	Law Reform Commission	2019 €2.2 million	4 Nov 2020	3 Dec 2020	Clear audit opinion
8	University College Dublin	2018/2019 €592 million	28 Sep 2020	3 Dec 2020	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of a deferred retirement benefit funding asset (standard for universities) • Significant non-compliant procurement
9	Insurance Compensation Fund	2019 €130 million	23 Oct 2020	3 Dec 2020	Clear audit opinion
10	Tipperary Education and Training Board	2019 €67 million	27 Oct 2020	4 Dec 2020	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to significant non-compliant procurement
11	National Cancer Registry Board	2019 €3.8 million	7 Oct 2020	7 Dec 2020	Qualified audit opinion Accounts give a true and fair view, except that they account for costs of retirement benefit entitlements only as they become payable (standard for many health bodies)

Noted.

4. Work Programme

The Committee agreed a number of engagements for the new year and added a number of bodies to its work programme.

The Committee adjourned at 6:32 p.m. until 13 January 2021.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Chairman
14 January 2021