



9 November, 2021

Sarah Cremin,
Committee Secretariat,
Committee of Public Accounts.

Dear Ms. Cremin,

I refer to your recent correspondence regarding the use of public funds by An Taisce.

Since establishment in 2017, the Department of Rural and Community Development has made a single annual payment to An Taisce to fund the Green Flag Community Award (which is an accreditation for excellence in the provision of public green spaces run by the community). The annual payments are listed in the table below. A payment of approximately €22,000 is planned for 2021.

Year	Total €
2017	18,245
2018	20,370
2019	20,572
2020	22,000
Total	81,187

Oversight of this funding takes place by way of a Service Level Agreement that is put in place between the Department and An Taisce each year. The Department satisfies itself that the grant funding provided to An Taisce is utilised for the intended purpose by receiving updates throughout the year, and an end-of-year report documenting the work undertaken with the funding throughout the year. The funding covers costs associated with the Green Flag Community Award, and the Department is also involved in the award process, which further provides the Department with certainty that the funds are being used for the intended purpose. Given the scale of funding involved, the Department's monitoring does not involve a review of An Taisce's financial statements, and the Department was not aware of the restatements referenced in the Committee's correspondence.

In summary the Department is satisfied that the funds granted for the Green Flag Community Award are fully utilised for the intended purpose and the Department is closely engaged with this programme, including participating in the award process which the funding is associated with.

The Department's monitoring does not involve a review of An Taisce's financial statements, and the Department was not aware of the restatements referenced in the Committee's correspondence.

I trust that the above information clarifies the matter with regard to funding of An Taisce by this Department.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin McCarthy
Secretary General