

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09.29 a.m. (online remotely), a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

**Deputies:** Deputies Brian Stanley (Cathaoirleach), Colm Burke, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, Matt Carthy, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Paul McAuliffe, Imelda Munster, Catherine Murphy (Leas-Chathaoirleach), Verona Murphy, Seán Sherlock.

**Apologies:** Deputy James O'Connor

**Permanent**

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

**1. Witnesses Examined**

**Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media**

- Ms. Katherine Licken, Secretary General
- Ms. Patricia Murphy, Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Media Division
- Mr. Conor Falvey, Assistant Secretary, Culture Division
- Mr. Cian O Lionáin, Assistant Secretary, Tourism and Sport
- Mr. Aodhán Mac Cormaic, Stiúrthóir na Gaeilge/ Director of Irish
- Mr. Joe Healy, Principal Officer, Head of Finance and IT
- Ms. Tania Banotti, Director of Creative Ireland
- Ms. Triona Quill, Assistant Secretary, Broadcasting and Media Division

**Department of Public Expenditure and Reform**

- Mr. Brian O'Malley, Principal Officer

**Matters for discussion**

- **Appropriation Account 2020 – Vote 33 Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media**
- **Accounts of the Public Services 2020 – Chapter 7:**  
Oversight of funding for the European Capital of Culture 2020

It was agreed that the Clerk would request any follow-up information and carry out any agreed actions arising from the meeting. It was also agreed to note and publish the opening statement and briefing documents provided to the Committee for the meeting.

The Committee suspended at 11.03.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11.16.

The Committee suspended at 12.32.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13.33.

The Committee went into **Private** Session at 13.34.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13.51.

## 2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18 November 2021 were agreed.

## 3. Financial Statements and Accounts Received

Ref	Body/main purpose	Accounting period/ turnover	Date certified	Date laid	Audit opinion/notes
1	<b>Sundry Moneys Account</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €387 million	5 Nov 2021	11 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion
2	<b>The Arts Council</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €109 million	6 Jul 2021	12 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion
3	<b>Irish Fiscal Advisory Council</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €787,000	3 Sep 2021	16 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion

The Accounts and Statements were noted.

As previously agreed, the Committee will request explanations for any significant non-compliant procurement or delays in laying accounts before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

## 4. Correspondence

Correspondence received		
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements	Decision	
R0909 PAC33	Briefing documents received from Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 25/11/2021	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R0918 PAC33	Opening Statement received from Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 25/11/2021	Note and publish.
<b>B - Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings</b>		<b>Decision</b>
R0872 PAC33	Correspondence received from Niall Cody, Chairman, Revenue Commissioners, dated 05/11/2021	<p>It was agreed to request further information from Revenue as to why only statutory reporting information is available to it and why the passage of time impedes access to relevant records.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Enterprise, Trade &amp; Employment to provide details of the number of people self employed including a breakdown by sector.</p>
R0883 PAC33	Correspondence received from Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Health, dated 11/11/2021	Note and publish. Request that the Department provide the Committee with a copy of the final report of Phase One when it is published.
R0885 PAC33	Correspondence received from Orleigh Quinn, Secretary General, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, dated 11/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0887 PAC33	Correspondence received from Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 11/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0888 PAC33	Correspondence received from Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, Department of Education, dated 12/11/2021	<p>It was agreed to request further details as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a detailed informaotn notye on the proposed technical solution</li> <li>- clarification if outsourcing is provided for in the tender specification</li> <li>- why will use of the electronic payroll service be optional and has consideration been given to providing the service on an opt out basis.</li> </ul>

<b>Correspondence received</b>		
R0889 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mark Griffin, Secretary General, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 12/11/2021	It was agreed to request further details including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does NBI carry the cost of upgrade/repair in relation to maintenance of the existing infrastructure;</li> <li>- what are the annual costs of maintaining the existing infrastructure;</li> <li>- what are the annual costs of using the existing infrastructure;</li> <li>- clarification regarding the exact nature of complications associated with COVID-19 and their impact on project timelines;</li> <li>- copy of NBI's remedial plan for 2022 when it's provided to the Department;</li> <li>- breakdown of €24.5m for procurement services;</li> <li>- schedule of works for the 679 primary schools including locations;</li> <li>- details of the arrangements and consequences of transporting waste for landfill and incineration given the location of these facilities in the east of the country;</li> <li>- clarification regarding calculations for grants provided under retrofitting schemes and local authorities' financial input;</li> <li>- further details including a breakdown of the advisory services referenced at Appendix 1</li> </ul>
R0890 PAC33	Correspondence received from Laura Burke, Director General, Environmental Protection Agency, dated 12/11/2021	Note and publish. Consider together once all responses received.
R0892 PAC33	Correspondence received from Joe Hackett, Secretary General, Department of Foreign Affairs, dated 15/11/2021	As per R0890 PAC33.
R0893 PAC33	Correspondence received from Liam Sloyan, Chief Executive, The National Treatment Purchase Fund, dated 15/11/2021	Note and publish.
<b>C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence</b>		<b>Decision</b>
R0881 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 9 November 2021	It was agreed to provide Nursing Homes Ireland with the updates the Committee has received in relation to the implementation of its recommendations and advise that the Department of Health will appear before the Committee on 16 December.
R0884 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 11 November 2021	Advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R0886 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 12 November 2021	Advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R0894 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 15 November 2021	Note.

Correspondence received		
R0895 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 16 November 2021	Note.
R0896 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 16 November 2021	Advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R0898 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 17 November 2021	Request the consent of the correspondence to forward the item to the Department.

## 5. Work Programme

The proposed work programme for the New Year was agreed.

It was agreed to add the following bodies to the work programme:

- Sport Ireland
- The Policing Authority

It was agreed to add the following items to the agenda for the proposed meeting with the Department of Education:

- 2018 Report on the Accounts of the Public Services - Chapter 7 Purchase of sites for school provision
- 2019 Report on the Accounts of the Public Services - Chapter 8 Management of the schools estate

## 6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **Private** Session at 14.42.

### Correspondence

R0906 PAC33	Correspondence from an individual, dated 17 November 2021	It was agreed to consider the correspondence at the meeting on 2 December 2021.
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### Draft report on engagements with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The Committee agreed its report on the 2019 Appropriation Account for Vote 34 – Housing, Planning and Local Government and related financial matters.

The Committee adjourned at 15.03 until Thursday 2 December 2021.



Brian Stanley, T.D.

Cathaoirleach  
2 December 2021