

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 09 DECEMBER 2021**

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09.34 a.m. (online remotely), a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

**Deputies:** Brian Stanley (Cathaoirleach), Colm Burke, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, Matt Carthy, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Neasa Hourigan, Paul McAuliffe, Imelda Munster, Catherine Murphy (Leas-Chathaoirleach), Verona Murphy, James O'Connor.

**Apologies:** Deputy Seán Sherlock

**Permanent**

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

**1. Witnesses Examined**

**Department of Social Protection**

- Mr. John McKeon, Secretary General
- Mr. Ciarán Lawler, Assistant Secretary – Finance
- Mr. John Conlon, Assistant Secretary – Control
- Ms. Joan Gordon, Chief Appeals Officer
- Ms. Philomena McShane, Chief Accountant

**Department of Public Expenditure and Reform**

- Ms. Ivana McGarr, Assistant Principal
- Ms. Jasmina Behan, Principal Officer

**Matters for discussion**

- **Appropriation Account 2020 – Vote 37 Social Protection**
- **Social Insurance Fund**
- **Accounts of the Public Services 2020**
  - **Chapter 9:** Regularity of social welfare payments
  - **Chapter 10:** Management of social welfare appeals
  - **Chapter 11:** Controls over the COVID-19 pandemic unemployment payment

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 11.15.

The Committee suspended at 12.45.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13.32.

## 2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 2 December 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>Regulator of the National Lottery</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €1.5 million	31 Aug 2021	24 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion  Attention is drawn to Note 9 pension provision. This discloses the reason why accumulated pension liabilities totalling €3 million have not been recognised in the financial statements, and that the Regulator is awaiting a decision of the Department of Public Expenditure about pension proposals submitted in 2015.  <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a>
2	<b>National Lottery Fund</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €576 million	31 Aug 2021	24 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion
3	<b>Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €77 million	30 Sep 2021	25 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion
4	<b>Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €120 million	30 Sep 2021	25 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion  Attention is drawn to non-compliance with procurement rules.  <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a>
5	<b>Charities Regulatory Authority</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €4.2 million	28 May 2021	25 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion
6	<b>Charity Funds</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €1.1 million	28 May 2021	25 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion

7	<b>State Property (Miscellaneous Deposits) Account</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €1.1 million	18 Nov 2021	25 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion
8	<b>Travellers' Protection Fund Investment Account</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €1.2 million	18 Nov 2021	25 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion
9	<b>Ireland-United States Educational Fund</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €1,100	17 Nov 2021	25 Nov 2021	Clear audit opinion
10	<b>Commission for Aviation Regulation</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €3.7 million	29 Sep 2021	1 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
11	<b>National Disability Authority</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €4.7 million	23 July 2021	2 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion

The Accounts and Statements were noted.

The Committee has a standing agreement to 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
R0952 PAC33	Briefing Documents received from John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 03/12/2021	Note and publish.
R0962 PAC33	Opening Statement received from John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 08/12/2021	Note and publish.
B - Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R0910 PAC33	Correspondence received from Bernard Gloster, Chief Executive, Tusla, dated 22/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0919 PAC33	Correspondence received from Maurice Buckley, Chairman, Office of Public Works, dated 25/11/2021	Note and publish. It was agreed to request further details in relation to the reasons for each of the instances of non-compliance.
R0922 PAC33	Correspondence received from John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 25/11/2021	Note and publish. It was agreed to request the Department to provide updates in relation to this matter on an ongoing basis.

Correspondence received		
R0924 PAC33	Correspondence received from Michael Keane, Vice-President, Administration and Finance, Mary Immaculate College, dated 25/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0925 PAC33	Correspondence received from Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 25/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0926 PAC33	Correspondence received from Catherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 25/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0927 PAC33	Correspondence received from John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 26/11/2021	Note.
R0931 PAC33	Correspondence received from Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 26/11/2021	Note and publish. It was agreed to consider all responses together once all responses received.
R0932 PAC33	Correspondence received from Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General, Department of Justice, dated 29/11/2021	Note and publish. It was agreed to request further details in relation to the reasons for each of the instances of non-compliance with procurement guidelines in relation to the Prison Service.
R0933 PAC33	Correspondence received from Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General, Department of Justice, dated 29/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0934 PAC33	Correspondence received from Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Rural and Community Development, dated 29/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0935 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ken Spratt, Secretary General, Department of Transport, dated 29/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0936 PAC33	Correspondence received from David Fitzpatrick, President, TU Dublin, dated 29/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0937 PAC33	Correspondence received from Jacqui McCrum, Secretary General, Department of Defence, dated 29/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0939 PAC33	Correspondence received from Fergal Lynch, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, dated 29/11/2021	Note and publish. It was agreed to accept the offer of further detailed information to be provided on a confidential basis and a briefing note regarding progress to date in relation to dismantling the system of direct provision.

<b>Correspondence received</b>		
R0940 PAC33	Correspondence received from Joe Hackett, Secretary General, Department of Foreign Affairs, dated 29/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0941 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 30/11/2021	Note and publish.
R0943 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mark Griffin, Secretary General, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 01/12/2021	Note and publish.
R0944 PAC33	Correspondence received from Angela Denning, Courts Service, Chief Executive Officer, dated 01/12/2021	Note and publish.
R0964 PAC33	Correspondence received from John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 08/12/2021	Note and publish.
<b>C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence</b>		<b>Decision</b>
R0920 PAC33	Correspondence received from the Joint Committee on Health, dated 25 November 2021	Note.
R0929 PAC33	Correspondence received from the Joint Committee on Petitions, dated 26/11/2021	Note.
R0947 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 01/12/2021	Note. It was agreed to request the author's consent to forward the correspondence to the Department of Health to request a response to the matters raised.

<b>For consideration in Private Session</b>		<b>Decision</b>
R0921 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 25 November 2021	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R0938 PAC33	Correspondence received from John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 29/11/2021	It was agreed to advise the correspondent to whom the correspondence relates of the Committee's decision.
R0942 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 29 November 2021	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R0945 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 05 November 2021	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R0950 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 30 November 2021	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

## 5. Work Programme

It was agreed to proceed with the work programme in the new year.

## 6. Any Other Business

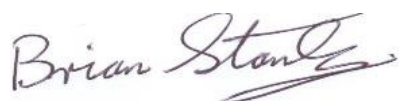
There was no other business.

The Committee went into **Private** Session at 14.04.

## 7. Draft report on engagements with the Department of Justice and the Irish Prison Service

The Committee agreed its report subject to clarification from the Department in relation to the independent review of Voluntary Mess Committees.

The Committee adjourned at 14.54 until Thursday 16 December 2021.



---

Brian Stanley, T.D.  
Cathaoirleach  
16 December 2021