

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 27 JANUARY 2022**

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09.32 a.m., 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, Séan Sherlock.

**Permanent**

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

**1. Witnesses Examined**

**National Transport Authority**

- Ms. Anne Graham, CEO
- Mr. Hugh Creegan, Deputy CEO / Director of Transport Planning and Investment
- Mr. Tim Gaston, Director of Public Transport Services
  
- Mr. David O'Flynn
- Mr. Philip L'Estrange

**Department of Transport**

- Ms. Ethna Brogan, Assistant Secretary
- Mr. Garret Doocey, Principal Officer, Assistant Secretary, Broadcasting and Media Division

**Matters for discussion**

- National Transport Authority Financial Statements 2020;
- The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area;
- Expenditure on Metrolink, BusConnects, and DART expansion and underground;
- Bus transport infrastructure;
- Public Private Partnerships; and
- The purchase of buses by the state for private operators.

The Committee suspended at 11.05.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11.17.

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 12.40.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13.34

## 2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20 January 2022 were agreed.

## 3. Financial Statements and Accounts

The Committee noted 27 sets of financial statements and accounts which were laid before the Dáil between 13 December 2021 and 21 January 2022.

Ref	Body/main purpose	Accounting period/ turnover	Date certified	Date laid	Audit opinion/notes
1	<b>Special EU Programmes Body</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a> <i>North South body</i>	2020 €98 million	8 Oct 2021	9 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
2	<b>National Library of Ireland</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €10.3 million	13 Oct 2021	9 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
3	<b>Local Government Fund</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €1.5 billion	26 Nov 2021	10 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
4	<b>An Bord Pleanála</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €32 million	30 Jun 2021	14 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
5	<b>Credit Institutions Resolution Fund</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €5.9 million	10 Dec 2021	15 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
6	<b>Food Safety Promotion Board (Safefood)</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a> <i>North South body</i>	2020 €8.7 million	20 Oct 2021	15 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
7	<b>National Council for Special Education</b>	2020 €14.3 million	10 Dec 2021	15 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion

[\(click here to view accounts\)](#)

8	<b>National Tourism Development Authority (Fáilte Ireland)</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €186 million	30 Jun 2021	16 Dec 2021	Qualified audit opinion  Accounts give a true and fair view except in relation to pension funding. Unlike most other grant funded bodies, the financial statements do not recognise a deferred retirement benefit funding asset in relation to some of its pension liability. This is on the basis that the Authority considers that it has not been provided with a statutory or other guarantee in relation to the future funding of this scheme.  <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a>
9	<b>Tourism Ireland</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a> <i>North South body</i>	2020 €62 million	14 Oct 2021	16 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
10	<b>Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €11.4 million	29 Oct 2021	16 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
11	<b>Intestate Estates Fund Account</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €3.8 million	16 Dec 2021	17 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
12	<b>National Paediatric Hospital Development Board</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €161 million	30 Nov 2021	20 Dec 2021	Qualified audit opinion  Accounts give a true and fair view, except that they account for the costs of retirement benefit entitlements of staff only as they become payable (standard for many health bodies).  <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>
13	<b>Special Account Hepatitis C – Insurance Scheme</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €1.7 million	29 Nov 2021	20 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
14	<b>National Training Fund</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €718 million	2 Dec 2021	22 Dec 2021	Clear audit opinion
15	<b>St Angela's College</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €14.3 million	18 Oct 2021	4 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion  Attention is drawn to note 11 which relates to retirement benefits accrued by current and former staff (standard for university sector). <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a>
16	<b>National University of Ireland</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €3.7 million	30 Aug 2021	6 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion

17	<b>Law Reform Commission</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €2.5 million	15 Dec 2021	7 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion
18	<b>St James's Hospital</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €516 million	22 Nov 2021	10 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion  Attention is drawn to non-compliance with procurement rules. <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a>
19	<b>Sport Ireland Facilities DAC</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €10.7 million	11 Oct 2021	12 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion
20	<b>Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €9.5 million	13 Oct 2021	14 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion  Attention is drawn to note 9 to the financial statements, which deals with the superannuation arrangements for staff. Discussions are ongoing between the Office and the Department of finance about funding of liabilities under the schemes. <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a>
21	<b>Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board CLG</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €9.1 million	1 Nov 2021	14 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion
22	<b>Leopardstown Park Hospital Board</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €17.5 million	2 Dec 2021	14 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion
23	<b>Special account for the purposes of the Health (Repayment Scheme) Act 2006</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €150,000	29 Nov 2021	18 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion
24	<b>Health Repayment Scheme (Donations) Fund</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 Nil turnover	29 Nov 2021	18 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion
25	<b>Health Service Executive Consolidated Patients' Private Property Accounts</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €41 million  <i>(Net assets at 31 Dec €103 million)</i>	30 Nov 2021	18 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion
26	<b>Institute of Public Administration</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €11.9 million	23 Nov 2021	18 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion
27	<b>Irish Museum of Modern Art</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €8.5 million	30 Jun 2021	18 Jan 2022	Clear audit opinion

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

It was agreed to request Bord Fáilte and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to provide a detailed information note in relation to pension funding.

#### 4. Correspondence

Correspondence received		
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements		Decision
R1022 PAC33	Briefing Documents received from Anne Graham, CEO, NTA, dated 21/01/2022	Note and publish.
R1026 PAC33	Opening Statement from Anne Graham, CEO, NTA, dated 25/01/2022	Note and publish.
R1027 PAC33	Correspondence received from Anne Graham, CEO, NTA, dated 27 January 2022	Note and publish.
B - Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1009 PAC33	Correspondence received from Niall Cody, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Chairman, dated 14/01/2022	Note and publish.
R1011 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mark Griffin, Secretary General, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 17/01/2022	Note and publish.
R1014 PAC33	Correspondence received from Fergal Lynch, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Secretary General, dated 18/01/2022	Note and publish. Forward to the relevant sectoral committee for its information. Request that the Department provides: - an update regarding the External Advisory Group; and - a timeline for the implementation of the White Paper to end Direct Provision and to establish a new International Protection Support Service.
R1016 PAC33	Correspondence received from Maurice Buckley, Office of Public Works, Chairman, dated 19/01/2022	Note and publish.
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		
R1012 PAC33	Correspondence from an individual, dated 17/01/2022	Note.

Correspondence received from 11 public bodies that provide funding to An Taisce was held over for consideration at the next meeting pending receipt of further information from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

## 5. Work Programme

It was agreed to proceed with the work programme and to schedule meetings with the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government, the Residential Tenancies Board and Home Building Finance Ireland.

It was also agreed to:

- add issues relating to Women's Refuges to the agenda for the meeting with the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government;
- add the University of Limerick to the Work Programme and to request that the Chancellor attend the meeting; and
- schedule the planned meetings with the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and the Policing Authority on the same morning.

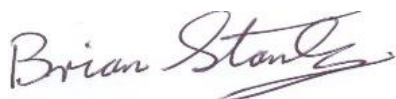
## 6. Any Other Business

It was agreed to request the Secretary General of the Department of Health to clarify the exact period of time during which he waived the increase in remuneration for his current post.

It was agreed to request the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to require that the reporting of the remuneration of Accounting Officers is included in note 5 of the 2021 Appropriation Accounts and every year thereafter. It was also agreed to request that the preceding year's remuneration is included for comparative purposes.

The Committee went into **Private** Session at 14.35.

The Committee adjourned at 14.42 until Thursday 3 February 2022.



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Brian Stanley, T.D.  
Cathaoirleach  
3 February 2022