



Mr. Martin Hughes,
Clerk to the Committee of Public Accounts.

By email only: pac@oireachtas.ie

15 March 2022

Our Ref: DJE-SG-00394-2021

Your Ref: SO723 PAC33

Dear Clerk,

I refer to your letter of 23 February, 2022 in relation to the procurement planning process in the Irish Prison Service.

I can confirm the Irish Prison Service (IPS) is implementing improvements to its procurement processes and procedures. A new software system is in place to track contracts and show contract managers upcoming end dates and indicative timelines based on tender complexity in order to facilitate timely commencement of tender processes. Like other state bodies, the IPS partners with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and therefore tenders have to take account of OGP timelines which can involve a lead-in time of up to eighteen months.

From time to time, security related issues and/or resourcing issues can arise which lead to delays in tenders, e.g. revisions to tender specifications were necessary following the discovery of contraband; specialist staff were diverted during the pandemic. Legal or technical issues may arise during a tender process which leads to delays. You will appreciate that Covid necessitated increased requirements for a cleaning services contract.

In summary, there is an improvement plan currently underway in the IPS which includes:

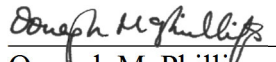
1. Development and implementation of new procurement software.
2. Procurement Compliance now escalated to Corporate Risk Register.
3. The adoption of a Corporate Procurement Plan, which includes a schedule of planned procurements.
4. Updated Corporate Procurement Policy and Procedures Documents.
5. Improved processes and reporting.
6. The engagement of external professional procurement assistance.
7. Frameworks being progressed for some proprietary supplies and services.

8. An External Review of Procurement with recommendations to be finalised on;

- a. Structures
- b. Resources
- c. Systems
- d. Training
- e. Communications.

Items 1 to 6 above have been completed to date, with the remaining two items currently in progress, and the external review of procurement expected to be finalised in Quarter 2 of this year.

Yours sincerely,



Oonagh McPhillips
Secretary General