

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 5 May 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, Imelda Munster, Catherine Murphy (Leas-Chathaoirleach), Verona Murphy, James O'Connor, Séan Sherlock.

**Permanent**

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

**1. Witnesses Examined**

**Department of Finance**

- Mr. John Hogan, Secretary General
- Ms Emma Cunningham, Assistant Secretary
- Mr. John McCarthy, Chief Economist for Economic Policy Division
- Mr. Des Carville, Head of Shareholding and Financial Advisory Division

**Matters for discussion**

- **Appropriation Accounts 2020**  
Vote 7 – Office of the Minister for Finance
- **C&AG Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2020**  
Chapter 1 - Exchequer funding outturn for 2020  
Chapter 16 - Apple Ireland escrow fund
- **Finance Accounts**  
Audited Financial Statements of the Exchequer for the Financial Year 1st January 2020 to 1st December 2020  
Financial Statements 2020: Department of Finance

The Committee suspended at 11.04.

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 went into **Private** session at 12.27

The Committee suspended at 12.36.

The Committee resumed in **Private** Session at 13.36.

## 2. Private Session

Sensitive correspondence		Decision
R1208 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 21/04/2022	Note. It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1213 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 25/04/2022	Note. It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

The Committee went into **Public** session at 14.03.

## 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 28 April 2022 were agreed.

## 4. Financial Statements and Accounts

The Committee noted two sets of financial statements and accounts which were laid before the Dáil between 25 and 29 April 2022.

Ref	Body/main purpose	Accounting period/ turnover	Date certified	Date laid	Audit opinion/notes
1	<b>Údarás na Gaeltachta</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €53 million	21 Dec 2021	25 Apr 2022	Clear audit opinion
2	<b>Legal Services Regulatory Authority</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a>	2020 €3.4 million	15 Dec 2021	28 Apr 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.

## 5. Correspondence

Correspondence received		
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements		Decision
R1226 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John Hogan, Secretary General, Department of Finance, dated 03/05/2022	Note and publish.
R1228 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John Hogan, Secretary General, Department of Finance, dated 04/05/2022	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1205 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Dara Deering, Chief Executive Officer, Home Building Finance Ireland (HBFi), dated 21/04/2022	Note and publish.  It was agreed to request clarification as to whether the breakdown by county of the average construction cost for Home Building Finance Ireland funded properties includes land costs as part of site costs.
R1207 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Peter Walsh, Chief Executive, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), dated 22/04/2022	Note and publish.  It was agreed to request further information including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- international comparisons in respect of the collection of tolls and how Ireland compares with other jurisdictions;</li> <li>- information about third-country vehicles including whether TII collects the tolls, and if so, how it collects them;</li> <li>- an information note regarding toll overpayments and the rationale for retention by the operator;</li> <li>- whether there are projects that will not proceed because they are no longer viable due to inflation and other costs;</li> <li>- further information regarding the update provided in relation to the N2 Clontibret to the Border scheme and the distinction between schemes that are on 'hold' and those that are 'under consideration';</li> <li>- an information note to include details of the cost-benefit analysis undertaken and the decision making rationale regarding funding, particularly in relation to the N2 Clontibret project.</li> </ul>

<b>Correspondence received</b>		
R1209 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Health, dated 25/04/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board to provide an information note to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- whether damages have been paid by the contractor for failure to complete sections of the project by agreed completion dates;</li> <li>- clarification regarding a potential conflict of interest and whether this was identified or considered and, if so, whether it was addressed;</li> <li>- up to date information on any claims submitted by the contractor that have been lost;</li> <li>- information in relation to reported arson attacks at the site and if they will impact on the overall cost to the taxpayer.</li> </ul> <p>It was also agreed to reiterate the request to the Secretary General of the Department of Health in respect of the timeframe for which he had waived a portion of his salary.</p>
R1212 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Kerstin Mey, President, University of Limerick, dated 26/04/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to advise the University of Limerick (UL) that capital funding being withheld by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science from the University of Limerick will be raised at the meeting with UL on 12 May 2022.</p>
R1215 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief Executive, National Transport Authority, dated 27/04/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the National Transport Authority to provide the Committee with a copy of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin area 2022 to 2035 when it is finalised.</p>
<b>C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence</b>		<b>Decision</b>
R1214 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual dated 26/04/2022	Note.

## 6. Work Programme

It was agreed to proceed with the work programme circulated for the meeting.

## 7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **Private** Session at 14.39.

**Annual Report 2021**

The report was agreed.

The Committee adjourned at 14.59 until Thursday 12 May 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Stanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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Brian Stanley, T.D.  
Cathaoirleach  
12 May 2022