

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 23 June 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, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Neasa Hourigan, Imelda Munster, Verona Murphy, James O'Connor.

**Apologies:** Deputies Catherine Murphy (Leas-Chathaoirleach), Matt Carthy, Alan Kelly and Paul McAuliffe.

**Permanent**

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

**1. Witnesses Examined**

**Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**

- Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General
- Ms Fiona Quinn, Assistant Secretary
- Mr. David Kelly, Principal Officer
- Ms Lorraine O'Donoghue, Principal Officer
- Ms Sinead O'Gorman, Principal Officer
- Ms Sinead Kehoe, Finance Officer

**Matters for discussion**

**Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2020**

- Chapter 3 – Central Government Funding of Local Authorities

The Committee suspended at 11.00.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11.11.

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 statements and briefing documents provided to the Committee for the meeting.

The Committee suspended at 12.37.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13.30.

## 2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16 June 2022 were agreed.

## 3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There was one set of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 13 and 20 June 2022.

Ref	Body/main purpose	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date laid	Audit opinion/notes
1	<b>Health Service Executive</b> <a href="#">(click here to view accounts)</a> <a href="#">(click here to view the C&amp;AG's audit report)</a>	2021 €21.6 billion	30 May 2022	20 Jun 2022	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The HSE incurred losses in 2021 totalling €109 million related to the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE).<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The value of PPE stock held at the year end was impaired at a cost of €71 million due to falling market prices for PPE. <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a></li><li>• The HSE wrote off excess stocks of hand gel and PPE at a cost of €38 million. <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a></li></ul></li><li>• HSE incurred costs of an estimated €1.25 million in 2021 to store a large quantity of protective suits which were written off (at a cost of €64 million) at end 2020. <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a></li><li>• As in previous years, HSE acknowledges ongoing significant non-compliant procurement of goods and services. <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a></li><li>• HSE outlines the actions it took following the cyber attack in May 2021, and how it is addressing recommendations to prevent similar attacks in the future. <a href="#">(click here for further information)</a></li></ul>

It was agreed to note the listings of the accounts and statements.

#### 4. Correspondence

Correspondence received		
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements		Decision
R1288 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Niamh Larkin, Director of Audit, Local Government Audit Service, dated 07/06/2022	Note and publish.
R1289 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Alan McDermott, Secretariat, National Oversight and Audit Commission, dated 07/06/2022	Note and publish.
R1313 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 17/06/2022	Note and publish.
R1316 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Nicholas Crossan, President, Association of Irish Local Government, dated 20/06/2022	Note and publish.
R1322 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 21/06/2022	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1271 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 27/05/2022	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1279 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Michael McGrath TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Houses of the Oireachtas, dated 31/05/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications to provide information notes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy targets, further details regarding an anticipated shortfall in energy requirements, what is the shortfall and what are the risks;</li> <li>• In relation to media reports that generators will be imported to meet energy needs, how many are planned, what type of fuel will they use and the estimated cost to meet energy needs during the coming winter; and</li> <li>• An update regarding Broadband Ireland targets for take up of services and a report on the number of premises passed by the end of June 2022 and on the number of homes actually connected, as well as projections and targets for the remainder of this year.</li> </ul>
R1281 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Vivienne Flood, Head of Public Affairs, RTÉ, dated 31/05/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request further clarification from RTÉ on whether pensions and holiday entitlements will form part of the discussions with workers once the investigations have concluded.</p>
R1285 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John Hogan, Secretary General, Department of Finance, dated 02/06/2022	See Minutes of Meeting of 16 June 2022 for the Committee's decision in relation to this item of correspondence.
R1290 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 02/06/2022	<p>See Minutes of Meeting of 16 June 2022 for the Committee's decision in relation to this item of correspondence.</p> <p>It was also agreed to request the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how many workers in total are being reviewed, the number of determinations made to date, the liability arising, and implications for holidays and PRSI.</li> <li>- an update in relation to the investigation in September 2022.</li> </ul>
R1305 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Dara Deering, Chief Executive Officer, Home Building Finance Ireland, dated 15/06/2022	Note and publish.

<b>Correspondence received</b>		
R1306 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Joseph Nugent, Chief Administrative Officer, An Garda Síochána, dated 15/06/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request further information as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in relation to question four, details of the total amount of overpayments in each of the years from 2017 – 2020;</li> <li>- in relation to question seven, a breakdown of medical services to the greatest level of detail possible;</li> <li>- in relation to question eight, further details in relation to the €15.5 million expenditure on 9,000 mobile devices and apps;</li> <li>- in relation to question 12, further detail on the types of reasons for the lack of prosecutions (ref. statistic regarding no prosecutions arising from cases between January 2010 and July 2017);</li> <li>- in relation to question 16, accept the offer of the final version of the implementation plan relating to the recommendations made by the Policing Authority arising from its review of the closures; and</li> <li>- in relation to question 18, reiterate the Committee's request for clarity as to how many of GSOC's recommendations that disciplinary action be taken against a Member of the force have been set aside by the Commissioner.</li> </ul>
R1308 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 27/05/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>Provide the HSE with the correspondence it provided to the Committee on 10 December 2020 (R0260) wherein it stated that initial contact had been made with the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau, and ask that the HSE reviews its response.</p>
<b>C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence</b>		<b>Decision</b>

Correspondence received		
R1268 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 25/05/2022	<p>Note.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the correspondent's consent to forward the correspondence to the relevant County Manager to respond to matters raised including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- why the proposal from the group didn't succeed;</li> <li>- the status of land for the project (the group advise the permission of landowners was secured);</li> <li>- what efforts were made by the Council to pursue this project once the funding was approved;</li> <li>- why was the funding returned when the council knew this project was included in the development plan;</li> <li>- whether the funding can be recouped; and</li> <li>- whether 'active travel' was part of the Council's considerations.</li> </ul>
R1297 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 11/06/2022	<p>Note.</p> <p>It was agreed at the meeting of 16 June 2022 that Deputy Hourigan would submit questions in relation to this matter to the Committee for its consideration.</p>
R1299 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 14/06/2022	<p>Note.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the correspondent's consent to forward the correspondence to the Department of Foreign Affairs for a response in advance of the Committee's scheduled meeting with it on 30 June 2022.</p>
R1307 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 16/06/2022	<p>Note.</p>
R1309 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 07/06/2022	<p>Note.</p>

## 5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed to proceed with the following engagements:

- Department of Foreign Affairs on 30 June 2022
- Department of Education on 7 July 2022
- An Bord Pleanála on 14 July 2022

## 6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **Private** session at 13.58.

Sensitive correspondence		Decision
R1310 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 14/06/2022	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

### Draft Committee Report

Examination of the 2019 Appropriation Account for Vote 29 – Environment, Climate and Communications: Programme B – Broadcasting, and the 2020 Appropriation Account for Vote 33 – Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

It was agreed to adopt the report.

The Committee adjourned at 14.43 until Thursday 30 June 2022.



---

Brian Stanley, T.D.  
Cathaoirleach  
30 June 2022