

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2022

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09:33 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, Verona Murphy.

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

Office of Public Works

- Mr. Maurice Buckley, Chairman
- Ms Rosemary Collier, Assistant Secretary, Head of Heritage Services and Capital Works Delivery
- Mr. Martin Bourke, Commissioner, Head of State Management
- Mr. Jim Casey, Head of Flood Risk Management
- Mr. Mike Long, Director of Corporate Services
- Mr. Ciaran O'Connor, State Architect/Principal Architect

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

- Ms Marie Mulvihill, Principal Officer

Matters for discussion:

- **Appropriation Accounts 2021:**
 - Vote 13 – Office of Public Works
- **Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2021:**
 - Chapter 8: Contract Payments in respect of the Convention Centre Dublin

The Committee suspended at 11:09.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:24.

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 13:06.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13:55.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 1 and 8 December 2022 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were eight sets of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 28 November and 9 December 2022.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (click here to view accounts)	2021 €74 million	29 Sep 2022	28 Nov 2022	Clear audit opinion
2	Irish Museum of Modern Art (click here to view accounts)	2021 €9.2 million	24 May 2022	28 Nov 2022	Clear audit opinion
3	Bord Bia (click here to view accounts)	2021 €81 million	30 Jun 2022	29 Nov 2022	Clear audit opinion
4	National Disability Authority (click here to view accounts)	2021 €5.1 million	6 Oct 2022	1 Dec 2022	Clear audit opinion
5	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (click here to view accounts)	2020/2021 €219,000	30 Sep 2022	2 Dec 2022	Clear audit opinion
6	Ireland-United States Educational Fund (click here to view accounts) <i>Balance at year end €1.4 million</i>	2021 Nil	8 Nov 2022	8 Dec 2022	Clear audit opinion
7	Travellers' Protection Fund Investment Account (click here to view accounts) <i>Balance at year end €nil</i>	2021 €2.2 million	6 Dec 2022	8 Dec 2022	Clear audit opinion
8	State Property (Miscellaneous Deposits) Account (click here to view accounts) <i>Balance at year end €2.6 million</i>	2021 €283,000	15 Nov 2022	8 Dec 2022	Clear audit opinion

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

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
R1623 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Maurice Buckley, Chairman, OPW, dated 12/12/2022	Note and publish.
R1624 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Maurice Buckley, Chairman, Office of Public Works, dated 13/12/2022	Note and publish.
R1626 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Maurice Buckley, Chairman, Office of Public Works, dated 14/12/2022	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1582 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Mark Griffin, Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 17/11/2022	Note and publish.
R1596 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Maurice Buckley, Chairman, OPW, dated 24/11/2022	Note and publish.
R1597 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Joe Hackett, Secretary General, Department of Foreign Affairs, dated 23/11/2022	Note and publish.
R1598 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 24/11/2022	Note and publish. It was agreed to request that the Committee be kept informed of developments regarding recruitment in St. Brigid's Hospice in Co. Kildare including recruitment for chaplaincy services.

Correspondence received		
R1600 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 24/11/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request further details as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in relation to point 8 regarding vacant HSE properties in counties Laois and Offaly: an update regarding the future use of Newtown Health Centre, details regarding the timeline for completing the refurbishment of Portarlinton Health Centre and Erril Health Centre and clarification regarding their future use, and in particular the current position in relation to Portarlinton Health Centre (the information provided is not consistent with a recent PQ reply); - in relation to point 9 regarding ICU beds: to provide the actual number of ICU beds that are available on a daily and weekly basis; - in relation to point 13 regarding the arrangements for dealing with the 2021 cyber attack: to request clarification if the HSE are adopting a proactive approach for dealing with cases where the data exposed is of a highly sensitive nature, where individuals do not have internet access, and for people who might not be in position to access the written correspondence and follow up accordingly.
R1603 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Maurice Buckley, Chairperson, OPW, dated 28/11/2022	Note and publish.
R1605 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Darragh O'Loughlin, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Horse Racing Regulatory Board, dated 28/11/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to advise the Committee if their agreement was sought to make the exit package confidential.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who requested that the terms of the exit package for the former CEO of the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board be kept confidential and subject to a non-disclosure agreement, and the rationale for same; and - to continue to provide updates regarding the installation of CCTV at racecourses and to provide an information note to include confirmation that they have been and will be installed in stable yards; and - to provide details of who will have access to CCTV recordings and in what circumstances.
R1606 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Michael McCarthy, Chairperson, NOAC, dated 30/01/2022	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1607 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Carol Boate, Regulator of the National Lottery, Regulator of the National Lottery, dated 30/11/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request further details including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clarification why the breakdown of self-exclusionary periods by duration is not available; - the number of instances in 2021 where players were flagged for high levels of spending, the number of individuals who received alert messages, the number of individuals who received phone calls, and the number of individuals who were excluded from playing; - an information note to include details regarding the requirements in relation to expenditure on player welfare and the minimum thresholds, and whether there is an obligation for a minimum spend and if so what that figure is; and - clarification regarding whether the Regulator is dealing with further data breaches. <p>It was agreed to request the Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland to consider reviewing its decision in relation to advertisements which reference 90% of lottery receipts being returned to the community in light of the fact that this figure includes unclaimed prize money which is diverted to advertising after a period of time.</p>
R1613 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ciarán Breen, Director, State Claims Agency, dated 06/12/2022	Note and publish.
R1615 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 06/12/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>In relation to the business case for the relocation of the National Maternity Hospital, it was agreed to request the Department of Health for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an information note to include details of shortcomings that were identified during the external assurance process undertaken by PwC; and - request regular updates regarding developments in relation to the various stages of the project.

Correspondence received		
R1617 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 08/12/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Departments of the Taoiseach and Public Expenditure and Reform to advise the Committee if they are examining other models for carrying out tribunals, inquiries and investigations, such as establishing a permanent office or agency or looking to best practice internationally.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for the full schedule of costs in relation to the Commission to Investigate into Olympic ticketing in Rio (Moran 2016).</p>
R1621 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 12/12/2022	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to hold over the item for consideration at the next meeting.</p>
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1574 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Neasa Hourigan, dated 11/11/2022	<p>Note.</p> <p>It was agreed to hold over the item until a response is received from the Charities Regulator.</p>
R1577 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, dated 15/11/2022	<p>Note.</p> <p>See R1574 PAC33</p>
R1584 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 19/11/2022	It was agreed to hold over the item for consideration at the next meeting.
R1599 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 24/12/2022	Note.
R1601 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Matt Carthy, dated 24/11/2022	<p>Note.</p> <p>See R1574 PAC33</p>
R1611 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 05/12/2022	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1612 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 05/12/2022	Note.
R1619 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Catherine Murphy, dated 09/12/2022	It was agreed to proceed as proposed by Deputy Murphy.

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme for the new year.

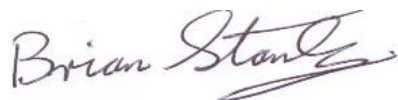
6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **private** session at 14:39.

Sensitive - for consideration in Private session		Decision
R1564 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 24/11/2022	Note.
R1602 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 01/12/2022	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1608 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 07/12/2022	It was agreed to proceed as agreed by the Committee.
R1616 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 07/12/2022	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

The Committee **adjourned** at 14:53 until Thursday 19 January 2023.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
19 January 2023