

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 26 JANUARY 2023

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09:33 a.m., a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

Deputies: Brian Stanley (Cathaoirleach), Matt Carthy, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Neasa Hourigan, Paul McAuliffe, Imelda Munster, Catherine Murphy, Verona Murphy.

Apologies: Colm Burke

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

- Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General
- Mr. Feargal O’Coighligh, Assistant Secretary, Housing Policy, Legislation and Governance
- Ms Caroline Timmons, Acting Assistant Secretary, Housing Affordability, Inclusion and Homelessness
- Mr. David Kelly, Principal Officer
- Ms Sinead O’Gorman, Principal Officer
- Mr. Paul Hogan, Principal Advisor, Planning

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

- Ms Clare Costello, Principal Officer

Matters for discussion:

- **Appropriation Accounts 2021**
 - Vote 34 – Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- **Local Government Fund Account 2021**
- **Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2021:**
 - Chapter 4 – Re-allocation of voted funds
 - Chapter 6 – Central Government funding of local authorities
 - Chapter 7 – The Housing Agency’s revolving Acquisition Fund

The Committee suspended at 11:08.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:20.

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 12.51.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13:35.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19 January 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were seven sets of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 16 and 20 January 2023.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	Medical Council (click here to view accounts)	2021 €16.1 million	30 Jun 2022	16 Jan 2023	Clear audit opinion
2	City of Dublin Education and Training Board (click here to view accounts)	2021 €564 million	15 Nov 2022	19 Jan 2023	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to non-compliance with procurement rules. (click here for further information)
3	Kerry Education and Training Board (click here to view accounts)	2020 €66 million	24 Nov 2022	19 Jan 2023	Clear audit opinion
4	Adoption Authority of Ireland (click here to view accounts)	2021 €5.1 million	24 Jun 2022	19 Jan 2023	Clear audit opinion
5	National Economic and Social Development Office (click here to view accounts)	2021 €2.1 million	29 Sep 2022	20 Jan 2023	Clear audit opinion
6	Environment Fund (click here to view accounts) Fund balance at year end: €6.9 million	2021 €11.8 million	19 Dec 2022	20 Jan 2023	Clear audit opinion
7	Climate Action Fund (click here to view accounts) Fund balance at year end: €144 million	2021 €105 million	16 Dec 2022	20 Jan 2023	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
R1697 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 20/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1700 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 24/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1701 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 25/01/2023	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1640 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Mark Griffin, Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 21/12/2022	Note and publish.
R1653 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Chris Hopkins, Government Accounting Unit, Department of Government Expenditure and Reform, dated 10/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1654 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 10/01/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to reiterate the request to the Department of Rural and Community Development for the business case for the project to develop a system to replace the Benefacts database and details of the scope of Pobal's proposed role in the project.</p> <p>It was also agreed to request the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for copies of the two Benefacts reports undertaken on behalf of the Department regarding pay and pensions for people working in the non-profit sector.</p>

Correspondence received		
R1656 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 11/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1657 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Eeva Leinonen, President, Maynooth University, dated 11/01/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to request further information including: - whether the Governing Body of the University was the decision maker in respect of terminating the construction contract; - further details regarding legal redress and the recovery of funds - who is recovering funds from who; - further details regarding plans for expenditure of funding collected under the student levy (ref. summary of financial information provided on p3).
R1658 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Dee Forbes, Director General, RTÉ, dated 11/01/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to request further details regarding Toy Show – The Musical including: - the number of shows scheduled and how many actually took place; - will the show proceed in 2023; - was a loss incurred and what was the loss; - was a cost benefit analysis undertaken and were promotion costs included in this analysis as an opportunity cost; - will a review be undertaken in advance of the next production run and provide the Committee with a copy of the review when completed; and - what contingency arrangements were in place to mitigate cancellation risks and advise customers.
R1659 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Suzanne Eade, Chief Executive, Horse Racing Ireland, dated 11/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1660 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Lorcan O'Connor, Group CEO, Córas Iompair Éireann, dated 10/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1661 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Angela Denning, CEO, Courts Service, dated 12/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1662 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 12/01/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1663 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 12/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1664 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ken Spratt, Secretary General, Department of Transport, dated 12/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1665 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Denis Cusack, Director and Board Member, Medical Bureau of Road Safety, dated 12/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1667 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1668 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1669 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Mary Hurley, Secretary General, Department of Rural and Community Development, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1670 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Kevin Lewis, Chief Executive, Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1671 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Joe Hackett, Secretary General, Department of Foreign Affairs, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1673 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Niall Cody, Chairman, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1674 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Joe Hackett, Secretary General, Department of Foreign Affairs, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1675 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ken Spratt, Secretary General, Department of Transport, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1676 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General, Department of Justice, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1677 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General, Department of Justice, dated 13/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1678 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Gunning, Chief Executive, National Paediatric Hospital Development Board, dated 13/01/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to advise the HSE and the Department of Health that the budget provision for 2023 for the National Children's Hospital will raised at the meeting with the HSE on 2 February.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board for further information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an update regarding the completion date and confirmation regarding the nine-month period for fitting out and for activation; and - details on when the moratorium on claims will end.
R1679 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Louise Loughlin, Deputy Director, Residential Tenancies Board, dated 16/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1680 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Lynn Scarff, Director, National Museum of Ireland, dated 17/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1681 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Maurice Buckley, Chairman, OPW, dated 17/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1682 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 17/01/2023	Note and publish.
R1685 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, President, NUI Galway, dated 18/01/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1686 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 18/01/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Justice to provide a briefing note on the potential supplementary or alternative approaches to carrying out tribunals and commissions of inquiry.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to provide the full schedule of costs in relation to the Commission to Investigate into Olympic ticketing in Rio (Moran 2016).</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 request the Charities Regulator for further details including why it has taken so long to get the application to a stage where a decision can be made to enter the applicant in the Register of Charities.</p>
R1577 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, dated 15/11/2022	See R1574 PAC33
R1601 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Matt Carthy, dated 24/11/2022	See R1574 PAC33
R1655 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 10/01/2023	Note.
R1687 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Paul McAuliffe, dated 18/01/2023	Held over for consideration at the meeting on 9 February 2023.
R1692 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Alan Dillon, dated 19/01/2023	Held over for consideration at the meeting on 9 February 2023.
R1696 PAC33	Correspondence received from Helen Martin, Chief Executive, Charities Regulator, dated 20/01/2023	Note. See R1574 PAC33

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme.

It was agreed to add the following to the Committee's work programme:

- Charities Regulator
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **private** session at 14:28.

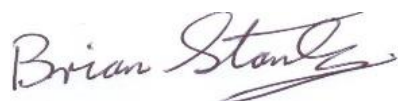
Sensitive - for consideration in Private session		Decision
R1690 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Alan Dillon, dated 19/01/2023	Held over for consideration at the meeting on 9 February 2023.
R1691 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Alan Dillon, dated 19/01/2023	Held over for consideration at the meeting on 9 February 2023.

7. Draft Committee Report

Examination of 2019 and 2020 Financial Statements for Horse Racing Ireland and related matters.

The report was adopted.

The Committee **adjourned** at 14:52 until Thursday 2 February 2023.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
9 February 2023