



Ms. Sarah Cremin

Committee Secretariat, Committee of Public Accounts

10/01/2023

Ref: S1123 PAC

Dear Ms. Cremin,

I refer to your correspondence dated 29th December 2022. Thank you for providing a link to the transcript of the Committee's proceedings from the 1st of December 2022, which was helpful in providing this response.

I wish to advise the following information in respect of the queries posed by the Committee:

1. Involving staff of Benefacts in the review of the business case by the Department and its decision to terminate funding:

The review of the business case and ensuing decision of the Department, concerning the funding of Benefacts, have been furnished to the Committee.

As has previously been advised, this process examined, *inter alia*, the data needs of the relevant public bodies that were frequent users of the service in addition to other potential solutions that may the State could have employed in respect of the type of service that Benefacts provided.

In respect of the demand analysis and, in particular, the data needs of public service bodies, the Department did not require any input from Benefacts, as the users were contacted directly by officials of the Department. Additionally, the Departments' officials were also fully aware and knowledgeable of the range of services being provided by, and activities of, the Company.

Moreover, as was outlined in the review and the relevant submission underpinning the decision, consideration was being given, during this time, to the option of potentially using a public procurement process to specify a contract for services for the type of service provided. In such circumstances, it would have been inappropriate for a potential future bidder/provider to be involved in the review of the business case.



2. Consideration of Benefacts' request for 'Teckal' status:

The Committee may wish to refer to my correspondence of 29th September 2022 in respect of this matter. For ease of reference, the relevant paragraphs state that:

"On 11th February 2021, the Chairman of Benefacts wrote to me providing a briefing document and thereafter wrote to the Minister on the 15th of March 2021 concerning future arrangements, including proposals to secure Benefacts' future by amending the company's institutional arrangements, in order to avail of the 'Teckal' exemption. Contrary to statements referenced at the Committee's proceedings, I can confirm that I wrote to Benefacts on the 15th of April 2021 providing the Department's response, including an assurance that the proposals had been given careful consideration. In that correspondence, I restated the Department's position that we would not be involved in any future planning arrangements, as the services provided by Benefacts were outside of this Department's policy remit.

The Committee may wish to note that at this time, I also wrote to relevant Secretaries General and Heads of Office outlining this Department's position and encouraging the relevant officials to assess their data needs in respect of the Benefacts service and consider any future arrangements that may be required to meet those needs. I also understand that Benefacts was in contact with a range of senior officials in early 2021 outlining their proposals for new institutional arrangements. Notwithstanding the provision of this information, no public service body identified an appreciable business need to assume a position as lead funder of the Benefacts service".

3. Copy of a business case from the Department of Rural and Community Development:

I can confirm that this Department has not received a business case in respect of any prospective database concerning grants management from the Department of Rural and Community Development. Accordingly, no such copy exists for onward transmission to the Committee.

An Roinn Caiteachais
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform
Oifig An Ard-Rúnaí
Office of the Secretary General



I hope that the Committee finds this information useful.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'David Moloney', is located below the 'Kind Regards' text.

David Moloney
Secretary General