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11.02.2023

Mr Brian Stanley, TD.,
Cathaoirleach,
Committee of Public Accounts,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

By email to Ms Sarah O'Farrell, Clerk of the PAC; pac@oireachtas.ie

Dear Ms O'Farrell,

I am writing to you as a follow-up to the discussion at yesterday's PAC meeting regarding the Heritage Council Annual Report 2021. I note that the Committee approved the Financial Statements. I am grateful to the Committee's for their support and interest in our work.

At yesterday's meeting, the Controller and Auditor General drew attention to the fact that the Annual Report was presented on 31st January. I would like to confirm that the Heritage Council's Financial Statements received the audit certificate from the Office of the Controller and Auditor General on 28th June 2022. The Financial Statement and Certificate were sent by the Head of Finance at the Heritage Council to the relevant official in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on 4th July 2022.

In common with other bodies, we publish our financial statements as part of our annual report. In compiling our Annual Report we attempt to provide an accurate overview of our work. To achieve this, we are dependent upon soliciting and compiling information from local authority heritage officers (32) and over 300 grantees spread across the country. Regrettably, the post of Head of Communications at the Heritage Council was vacant from 2020 through to mid-2022. Therefore, our work on researching and scripting the annual report was delayed in 2021 and for a large part of 2022.

I fully acknowledge that this is not optimum practice and regret that the Annual Report was only laid before the Committee yesterday. Now that we have increased resources in communications our focus will be on meeting prescribed deadlines.

Again, I want to thank the Committee for their support. I am happy to provide further information if necessary and confirm that we are working to ensure that we will meet the required deadlines.
 Please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Kind regards,

Virginia Teehan
Chief Executive Officer