

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 16 February 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), Colm Burke, Matt Carthy, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Paul McAuliffe, Imelda Munster, Catherine Murphy.

Apologies: Verona Murphy

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

- Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General
- Ms Carol Baxter, Assistant Secretary
- Ms Lara Hynes, Acting Assistant Secretary
- Ms Laura McGarrigle, Assistant Secretary
- Ms Sheenagh Rooney, Assistant Secretary
- Mr. Toby Wolfe, Principal Officer

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

- Ms Jessica Lawless, Principal Officer

Office of Public Works

- Mr. Ciaran O'Connor, State Architect

Matters for discussion:

- **Appropriation Accounts 2021**
 - Vote 40 – Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (resumed)

The Committee suspended at 10.57

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:08.

It was agreed that the Clerk would request any follow-up information and carry out any agreed actions arising from the meeting.

It also agreed to request that the following information be provided within one week:

1. Breakdown of the number of instances in which local public representatives were informed in advance of new accommodation centres being opened in their community since 2020.

2. Breakdown of the number of people seeking International Protection and the number of Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection as a percentage of population for each EU country.
3. Breakdown of the number of people seeking International Protection and the number of Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection accommodated per county and per local authority in Ireland.

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 12:42

The Committee resumed in **Private** session at 13:32.

Legal Briefing

The Committee received a legal briefing from the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisors.

C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1736 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 30/01/2023	It was agreed to hold over this item for consideration at the next meeting.
R1738 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 10/02/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
Sensitive - for consideration in Private session		Decision
R1691 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Alan Dillon, dated 19/01/2023	It was agreed to request Inland Fisheries Ireland to provide a document to the Committee.

The Committee went into **Public** session at 14.42.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 1 February and 9 February 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were two sets of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 06 February and 10 February 2023.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigúla (click here to view accounts)	2021 €916,000	20 Dec 2022	8 Feb 2023	Clear audit opinion
2	Food Safety Promotion Board (SafeFood) (click here to view accounts) <i>North South body</i>	2021 €9.1 million	23 Dec 2022	9 Feb 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
R1737 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, dated 10/02/2023	Note and publish.
R1739 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, dated 10/02/2023	Note and publish.
R1747 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, dated 10/02/2023	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1725 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 07/02/2023	Note and publish.
R1726 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Mary Hurley, Secretary General, Department of Rural and Community Development, dated 07/02/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to hold over this item for consideration at the next meeting.

Correspondence received		
R1728 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, dated 08/02/2023	Note and publish.
R1730 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John Callinan, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach, dated 08/02/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to request the Department of Justice for an information note to include what work has been done in looking at international examples of best practice in respect of tribunals of investigation that can be implemented taking into account constitutional requirements and to report back to the Committee.
R1745 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Natasha O'Brien, Oireachtas Co-ordination Unit, Department of Health, dated 09/02/2023	Note and Publish.
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1699 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Laura Pathe, Clerk to the Joint Committee, Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media, dated 23/01/2023	Note. It was agreed to provide the joint committee with previous and future correspondence received from RTÉ on the matter.
R1723 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Carol Nolan, dated 30/01/2023	It was agreed to advise Deputy Nolan to request the correspondence directly from the Deputies concerned.
R1727 PAC33	Correspondence received from Deputy Matt Carthy, dated 02/02/2023	Note. It was agreed to consider the item as part of the Committee's work programme.
R1735 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 30/01/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme.

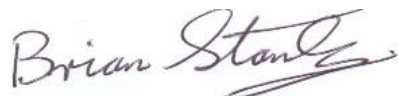
It was agreed to schedule the following meetings:

- 23 March 2023: Enterprise Ireland.
- 30 March 2023: Department of Rural and Community Development.
- 20 April 2023: An Bord Pleanála.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee **adjourned** at 14:59 until Thursday 23 February 2023.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Brian Stanley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
23 February 2023