

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 23 March 2023

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09:34 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, Catherine Murphy, Verona Murphy, James O'Connor.

Apologies: Deputy Imelda Munster

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

Enterprise Ireland

- Mr. Leo Clancy, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms Gillian Brennan, Divisional Manager, Business Operations
- Mr. Kevin Sherry, Executive Director, R&I, T&S, Investment Services and Global Markets
- Ms Carol Gibbons, Divisional Manager for Regions and Local Enterprise
- Mr. Richard Murphy, Department Manager for the Local Enterprise Office Centre of Excellence

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

- Ms Karen Hynes, Principal Officer, Indigenous Enterprise Division

Matters for discussion:

- **Financial Statements 2021**
 - Enterprise Ireland

The Committee suspended at 10.59.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:10.

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 12:09

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13:32.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9 March 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

Ten sets of financial statements and accounts were laid before the Dáil between 6 March and 17 March 2023.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	Ireland-United States Commission for Educational Exchange (click here to view accounts)	2021/2022 €1.7 million	7 Mar 2023	7 Mar 2023	Clear audit opinion
2	InterTradeIreland (click here to view accounts)	2021 €23 million	30 Sep 2022	8 Mar 2023	Clear audit opinion
3	University College Cork (click here to view accounts)	2020/2021 €432 million	20 Dec 2022	10 Mar 2023	<p>Qualified audit opinion</p> <p>The University recognises an asset in respect of deferred pension funding (which is standard practice for universities). However, the amount of the asset recognised includes €11.4 million in respect of liabilities related to professional added years for transferred-in service. This is an estimated €3.4 million more than is provided for in an agreement between the University and the HEA. The account is therefore qualified in that respect. Otherwise, the financial statements present a true and fair view. (click here for further information)</p> <p>Attention is also drawn to disclosure of material level of non-compliance with procurement rules. (click here for further information)</p>
4	Ordnance Survey Ireland (click here to view accounts)	2021 €29 million	14 Dec 2022	10 Mar 2023	<p>Clear audit opinion</p> <p>Attention is drawn to the assumptions underpinning the recognition of a deferred pension funding asset (standard for bodies with substantial non-State income).</p>

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
5	Beaumont Hospital Board (click here to view accounts)	2021 €547 million	21 Dec 2022	10 Mar 2023	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hospital Board acknowledges it did not carry out a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control in the manner required by the <i>Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies</i> (click here for further information) Disclosure of material level of non-compliant procurement. (click here for further information)
6	Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland (click here to view accounts)	2021 €33 million	20 Dec 2022	10 Mar 2023	Clear audit opinion
7	Tipperary Education and Training Board (click here to view accounts)	2021 €75 million	22 Dec 2022	14 Mar 2023	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to disclosure of material level of non-compliance with procurement rules. (click here for further information)
8	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (click here to view accounts)	2021 €170 million	15 Dec 2022	14 Mar 2023	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to disclosure of material level of non-compliance with procurement rules. (click here for further information)
9	Fishery Harbour Centres (click here to view accounts)	2021 €15 million	21 Dec 2022	14 Mar 2023	Clear audit opinion
10	Public Trustee Account (click here to view accounts) <i>Value of funds at end year: €1.8 million</i>	2022 €30,000	28 Feb 2023	16 Mar 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
R1804 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Leo Clancy, Chief Executive Officer, Enterprise Ireland, dated 16/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1805 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Leo Clancy, Chief Executive Officer, Enterprise Ireland, dated 16/03/2023	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1764 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John Hogan, Secretary General, Department of Finance, dated 27/02/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Finance for further information regarding development contributions received by local authorities to include development levy income for 2022 by Local Authority area and the related amount on deposit in each local authority account.</p> <p>It was also agreed to request clarification regarding the restrictions on spending of development levies that were put in place following the financial crisis to include the current status.</p>
R1772 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, dated 03/03/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform for its latest estimate of the final cost of the National Children's Hospital on the understanding that it may be subject to change.</p>

Correspondence received		
R1773 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, dated 03/03/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform to provide the following information regarding the proposed sale of the National Lottery licence including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if there is an exit penalty for the current licence holder; - who will handle the sale of the National Lottery licence; - how will the National Lottery licence be sold; - will the sale of the National Lottery licence have any consequences for An Post who is a junior partner; - clarification of the role of State agencies regarding the sale of the National Lottery licence and the roles of the Regulator and the Department; and - if consideration is being given to the State purchasing the National Lottery licence.
R1774 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John Tuohey, Interim CEO, Rásaíocht Con Éireann, dated 03/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1776 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Darragh O'Loughlin, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Horse Racing Regulatory Board, dated 06/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1777 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 07/03/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to hold over the item for consideration at the next meeting.</p>
R1778 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 07/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1779 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 07/03/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media if the amount provided regarding legal fees is the final amount or if there are further third-party legal fees due.</p> <p>It was also agreed to request clarification whether the information provided in relation to barristers' fees relates solely to the inquiry or does it also include the costs for third parties who participated in the inquiry.</p>
R1781 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Andrew Algeo, Chief Executive Officer, Premier Lotteries Ireland, dated 08/03/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1784 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Jim Breslin, Secretary General, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science, dated 08/03/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to hold over the item for consideration at the next meeting.
R1786 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Linda O'Rourke, Residential Energy Efficiency Division, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 02/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1787 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, dated 09/03/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to request the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to advise if discussions have taken place with the Minister for Foreign Affairs or at EU level regarding information provided in relation to beneficiaries of temporary protection as a percentage of population for each EU country.
R1788 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John McKeon, Secretary General, Department of Social Protection, dated 09/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1790 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Niall Cody, Chairman, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, dated 09/03/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to hold over the item for consideration at the next meeting.
R1791 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 10/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1795 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Mark Griffin, Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 14/03/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to request a quarterly update from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications regarding the arrangements for ensuring that there is a clear framework for control, including financial reporting, and accountability for public funds at Inland Fisheries Ireland.
R1797 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Gabriel Makhoul, Governor, Central Bank of Ireland, dated 14/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1798 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Chris Hopkins, Government Accounting Unit, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, dated 15/03/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1799 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Chris Hopkins, Government Accounting Unit, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, dated 15/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1800 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, dated 15/03/2023	Note and publish.
R1801 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 15/03/2023	<p>Note and Publish</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Health to provide details in relation to appeals in respect of nursing home charges, including details regarding the number of residents of community services and disability services who were affected and either did not apply for long stay repayments, or applied and did not appeal, and to request that it is provided before close of business on Friday 31 March 2023.</p> <p>It was also agreed to request information regarding actions being taken to ensure that nursing home clients are not charged for items that would be covered under the medical card scheme.</p>
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1780 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 08/03/2023	<p>Note.</p> <p>It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.</p>

Correspondence received		
R1785 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 08/03/2023	<p>Note.</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Education for the following information regarding Kolbe Special School, Portlaoise, Co. Laois;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the financial criteria used for removing a school from the Schools Building Programme priority list or putting it on hold; - the basis for removing the school from the priority list; - who makes these decisions within the Department, (i.e. is it a unit, the Secretary General and the Minister, or is it a combination of that); - if the Public Spending Code has a bearing on the decision to remove schools from the priority list; - who is responsible for conducting a reappraisal of 58 schools buildings projects that were put on hold; and - how much funding is available for the School Building Programme this year and what funding is available for remedial works for the next 5 years. <p>It was also agreed to request the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform for information regarding its role in relation to the School Building Programme and if the Public Spending Code has a bearing on the decision to remove schools from the priority list.</p>
R1792 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 10/03/2023	Note.
R1793 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 13/03/2023	<p>Note.</p> <p>It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.</p>

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme.

The Committee agreed to schedule a meeting with the Department of Justice.

6. Any Other Business

The Committee went into **private** session at 14:53.

Sensitive - for consideration in Private session	Decision
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R1771 PAC33	Correspondence from an individual dated 24 February 2023	Note. It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1789 PAC33	Correspondence from an individual dated 9 March 2023	Note. It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1794 PAC33	Correspondence from an individual dated 6 March 2023	Note. It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would make arrangements for Members to review correspondence from the University of Limerick.

Revised arrangements for the circulation of correspondence to Committee Members and their staff were agreed.

The Committee **adjourned** at 15:09 until Thursday 30 March 2023.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
30 March 2023