

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 04 MAY 2023

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09:32 a.m., a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

Deputies: Brian Stanley (Cathaoirleach), Colm Burke, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Alan Kelly, Catherine Murphy, Verona Murphy, Marc Ó Cathasaigh.

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

- Mr. Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General
- Mr. Bill Callanan, Assistant Secretary General
- Mr. Colm Hayes, Assistant Secretary General
- Ms Caroline Ball, Principal Officer
- Ms Roni Hawe, Principal Officer
- Ms June Fanning, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer

Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

- Mr. Gerry Glabby, Principal Officer
- Mr. Marc Kierans, Principal Officer

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

- Ms Georgina Hughes-Elders, Principal Officer

Matters for discussion:

- **Appropriation Accounts 2021**
 - Vote 30 – Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- **Financial Statements 2021:**
 - Fishery Harbour Centres

The Committee suspended at 10:53.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:04.

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 12:46

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13:36.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27 April 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There was one set of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 24 and 28 April 2023.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	Account of the Receipt of Revenue of the State collected by the Revenue Commissioners (click here to view accounts)	2022 €118 billion	17 Apr 2023	26 Apr 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
R1868 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 02/05/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1873 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 03/05/2023	Note and publish.
R1874 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, dated 03/05/2023	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1824 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms SORCHA Fitzpatrick, Chief Superintendent, An Garda Síochána, dated 25/03/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to hold over the item for consideration at the next meeting.
R1850 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Sara Maxwell, Office of the CEO, Health Service Executive (HSE), dated 21/04/2023	Note and Publish In relation to the issue of residents being charged for items that are normally covered under the medical card scheme, it was agreed to forward the response to the Department of Health highlighting that the HSE has no role in or control over the contractual arrangements that exist between private nursing homes and their residents and to request the Department for an information note to include what it is doing: - to ensure that the contracts it has with nursing home providers preclude such practices; and - to implement measures to ensure that residents in nursing homes are not charged for items covered under the medical card scheme. In relation to the Strategic Review of General Practice (in respect of out-of-hours GP service) referenced in the correspondence, it was agreed to request the HSE for further details including: - the timeline for completion of the review; and - when any actions arising from the review will be implemented.
R1852 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ken Spratt, Secretary General, Department of Transport, dated 24/04/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1855 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 25/04/2023	<p>Note and Publish</p> <p>It was agreed to write to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to highlight that the delivery of local authority-constructed houses is at a very low scale despite the level of funding available, and to request what steps are being taken to speed up delivery including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are local authorities using more standardised designs and plans to try to speed up delivery; - if there are any plans to move towards standardised designs in the current year rather than having a unique architectural design for every housing scheme; and - confirmation that Local Authorities have the staff resources (engineers, technicians etc.) needed to oversee and sign off on housing projects in a timely manner.
R1857 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John Hogan, Secretary General, Department of Finance, dated 26/04/2023	Note and publish.
R1858 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 26/04/2023	Note and publish.
R1859 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Helena Hughes, Office of the CEO, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, dated 19/04/2024	Note and publish.
R1867 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Mark Griffin, Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 28/04/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1870 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Lisa Williamson, Private Secretary to the Secretary General, Department of Health, dated 02/05/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>In relation to the agenda for the meeting on 11 May, it was agreed to defer consideration of matters related to the Health Repayment Scheme (nursing home charges).</p> <p>It was agreed to request the Department of Health to provide a detailed briefing of matters related to the Health Repayment Scheme (nursing home charges) as soon as possible following consideration of the matter by Government.</p> <p>It was also agreed to add the following item to the agenda for the meeting on 11 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriation Account 2021: Vote 38 - Health (Subhead) E.3. The National Treatment Purchase Fund
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1853 PAC33	Correspondence received from Catherine Murphy, T.D., Houses of the Oireachtas, dated 25/04/2023	<p>Note.</p> <p>It was agreed to request clarification from the Department of Social Protection regarding information provided at the PAC meeting on 1 December 2022 and related information provided in a PQ on 20 April 2023.</p>
R1865 PAC33	Correspondence received from Catherine Murphy T.D., Houses of the Oireachtas, dated 28/04/2023	Note.

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme.

It was agreed to make a submission to the Committee on Remit Oversight to extend the Committee's orders of reference.

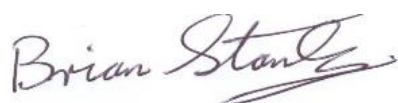
6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **private** session at 13:59.

Sensitive - for consideration in Private session		Decision
R1832 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 03/04/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1846 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 17/04/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

The Committee **adjourned** at 14:13 until Thursday 11 May 2023.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
11 May 2023