

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 25 MAY 2023

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09:35 a.m., a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

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

Apologies: Deputies John Brady and James O'Connor

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

Department of Justice

- Ms Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General
- Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan, Deputy Secretary General, Civil Pillar
- Mr. John O'Callaghan, Deputy Secretary General, Criminal Pillar
- Mr. Aonghus O'Connor, Principal Officer, Finance and Procurement
- Mr. William O'Dwyer, Principal Officer, Immigration Service Delivery

Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform

- Mr. Daniel O'Callaghan, Principal Officer

Matters for discussion:

- **Appropriation Accounts 2021**
 - Vote 34 – Justice

The Committee suspended at 10:55.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:05.

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 12:40

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13:34.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18 May 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

No financial statements and accounts were laid before the Dáil between 15 and 19 May 2023.

4. Correspondence

Correspondence received		
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements		Decision
R1903 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General, Department of Justice, dated 19/05/2023	Note and publish.
R1909 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General, Department of Justice, dated 24/05/2023	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1889 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, dated 12/05/2023	Note and publish.
R1891 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Gabriel Makhoul, Governor, Central Bank of Ireland, dated 12/05/2023	Note and publish.
R1894 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Niall Cody, Chairman, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, dated 15/05/2023	Note and publish.
R1896 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Christy Duffy, Chief Executive, City of Dublin Education and Training Board, dated 17/05/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1898 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. John Hogan, Secretary General, Department of Finance, dated 17/05/2023	Note and publish.
R1904 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Phelim Devine, Project Director, National Paediatric Hospital Development Board, dated 19/05/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request further information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - details of the fit-out project and if the fit-out has been future-proofed or reviewed in the context of changes to practices due to Covid such as facilities that allow the use of technologies for remote engagement between healthcare facilities, and, if not, has there been project overrun as a consequence; - to advise the Committee when the updated programme for substantial completion is received from the contractor, what penalties are available under the contract due to the delay in the programme being submitted and if the Board is considering applying these penalties; - the Board's response to media reports that it will be the end of 2025 before the new national children's hospital is open to patients and, if this is not the case, confirm the current projected opening date.
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1887 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 11/05/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1888 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 12/05/2023	It was agreed to hold over the item for consideration at the next meeting.
R1892 PAC33	Correspondence received from the Joint Committee on Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science, dated 25/04/2023	Note.
R1893 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 04/05/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1895 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 16/05/2023	Note.

Correspondence received		
R1899 PAC33	Correspondence received from Paul McAuliffe, T.D., Houses of the Oireachtas, dated 17/05/2023	<p>It was agreed to request the following information from the Health Service Executive (HSE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - why the solution in the case referred to in the correspondence was put in place and why it was not made available to others; - the criteria around why the payment was made in this case, and whether length of time on the waiting list was a consideration; - are there implications in relation to the entitlement of others to reimbursement of payments for private healthcare; - the source of funding in the HSE's budget for the payment of private assessments of individual patients and how many other cases has the HSE paid for private assessments of individual patients. <p>It was also agreed to request an information note to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - details regarding a proposal to establish six regional assessment teams and details on the HSE's endeavours to access agency staff for this purpose, whether expressions of interest were sought from providers, and the timeframe involved in assessing whether the HSE could get agency staff.

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme.

It was agreed to schedule a meeting with the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board on 29 June 2023.

It was agreed to schedule a meeting with the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board in the Autumn.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **private** session at 14:36.

7. Draft Committee Report

The introduction to the following draft report was agreed:

- o Examination of the 2019 and 2020 Appropriation Accounts for Vote 31 – Transport, the 2020 Financial Statements for the National Transport Authority, and the 2020 Financial Statements for Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

It was agreed to defer further consideration of the report until the next meeting.

The Committee **adjourned** at 14.56 until Thursday 1 June 2023.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
01 June 2023