



Sam Keenan
Committee Secretariat,
Committee of Public Accounts,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

04 April 2023

Your Ref: S1230 PAC33

Dear Sam,

Please find attached:

- Responses to requests in your letter dated 1st March 2023 (Note not all responses have been provided. These will be forwarded as soon as possible)
- Appendix to response document
- Update Value for Money response
- Specific Value for Money templates requested

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Maurice Buckley".

Maurice Buckley

Chairman



OPW Oifig na
nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

Response to Public Accounts Committee requests

Ref: S1230 PAC33

March 2023

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Request 1 - A preventative maintenance plan for the OPW, taking in all responsible districts and regions, to be coordinated and sent to the Committee (pgs. 10-11).

The OPW is responsible for maintenance across a portfolio of over 2,000 buildings and properties. Planned preventative maintenance includes both Mechanical and Electric (M&E) and building fabric maintenance. Nationwide and regional approaches are used to deliver planned preventative maintenance.

1. M&E Planned Preventative Maintenance

The M&E planned preventative maintenance is managed centrally and delivered via the OPW Helpdesk. The planned preventative maintenance methodology for M&E equipment and systems is based primarily on the use of contracted periodical visits to maintain and oversee buildings/ properties and their systems and equipment e.g. monthly and quarterly. During these visits scheduled maintenance is carried out, assessments regarding further preventative maintenance works, upgrades are evaluated, and these are then carried out as deemed appropriate.

Circa 6,000 maintenance contracts are currently in place by the OPW M&E Services, of which the vast majority are statutory in nature e.g. Fire and Emergency Lighting. These contracts help to ensure that mandatory requirements are in place across the portfolio.

The periodicity and maintenance requirements within a maintenance contract are based on the following:-

- Statutory legislation requirements
- OPW and Industry standards
- Criticality of equipment to the business
- Condition of the equipment
- Best practice
- Manufacturers recommendations

2. Building Fabric Planned Preventative Maintenance

Building fabric planned preventative maintenance is managed in the Regions and Districts. Planned preventative maintenance for the fabric of the building includes a schedule of routine inspections, carrying out minor repairs and other interventions to ensure the continued proper functioning of the building stock in order to maximise the life of those elements.

In relation to the building fabric elements, a planned preventative maintenance programme is put in place on selected properties and/or elements of properties based on risk assessments. Where required, contracts are put in place to carry out specialist inspections in relation to specified items and at defined intervals. For example cleaning roofs and rainwater goods once or twice per annum depending on the location.

3. Summary of the 2023 Budget Allocation and Planned Preventative Maintenance for Building Fabric and M&E Services

A summary of the 2023 budget allocation for building fabric and M&E maintenance under the B7 current expenditure subhead is as follows:

| 2023 Budget Allocation and Planned Preventative Maintenance For Building Fabric and M&E Services | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Funding Source | Type of Maintenance | Planned & Preventative Maintenance €000 | Budget Allocation €000 |
| B7 - FS29 – Current Expenditure Departmental Client Maintenance | Building Fabric | €8,251 | €29,555 |
| | M&E | €16,255 | |
| B7 - FS30 – Current Expenditure OPW Owned & Occupied Buildings | Building Fabric | 1,764 | €12,298 ¹ |
| | M&E | 7,400 | |
| Total | | €33,670 | €41,853 |

Circa 80% of the budget allocation, for building fabric and M&E maintenance, under the B7 subhead is planned and preventative maintenance.

Note

Planned and preventative maintenance is less than the budget allocation. This is to allow for contingency events and reactive maintenance.

The maintenance expenditure and profiles to the end of the year are reviewed on a monthly basis and updated accordingly.

¹ This budget allocation relates to Property Maintenance (Building Fabric) and M&E Services only. It does not take account of the total budget allocation for B7 - FS30 – Current Expenditure.

4. Building Fabric Planned and Preventative Maintenance

a. Funding Source B.7 FS29 Departmental Client Maintenance

The table below provides a summary of the 2023 planned and preventative building fabric maintenance grouped by Region:

| Summary of the 2023 Planned Building Fabric Maintenance grouped by Region | | |
|---|--|--|
| Region | Planned Maintenance Minor Works | Total Planned Maintenance Profiled €000 |
| Dublin North | 30 | €1,775 |
| Dublin South | 9 | €1,009 |
| Mid-West | 9 | €320 |
| North East | 7 | €350 |
| North West | 13 | €475 |
| South East | 22 | €1,327 |
| South West | 15 | €946 |
| West | 15 | €80 |
| All 8 Regions | €250k is allocated to each Region for small planned/preventative maintenance works | €2,000 |
| Total | | €8,282 |

b. Funding Source B7.FS30 Maintenance in OPW Owned & Occupied buildings

The table below provides a summary of the 2023 planned building fabric maintenance grouped by Region:

| Summary of the 2023 Planned Building Fabric Maintenance grouped by Region | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Region | Planned Maintenance Minor Works | Total Planned Maintenance Profiled €000 |
| Dublin North | 11 | €853 |
| Dublin South | 1 | €100 |
| Mid-West | 2 | €65 |
| North East | 1 | €25 |
| North West | 2 | €150 |
| South East | 5 | €190 |
| South West | 2 | €124 |
| West | 9 | €407 |
| Total | 33 | €1,914 |

5. Planned Preventative Maintenance

The table below provides a summary of the 2023 M&E PPM regime which is carried out via the OPW Helpdesk and delivered nationwide:

| 2023 M&E Planned Preventative Maintenance | |
|---|---|
| Funding Source | Total Planned Maintenance Profiled €000 |
| B7 - FS29 – Current Expenditure Departmental Client Maintenance | €16,255 |
| B7 - FS30 – Current Expenditure OPW Owned & Occupied Buildings | €7,400 |
| Total | €23,655 |

| M&E: examples of statutory contract types and numbers in place | |
|--|--------------|
| Type of contract | No. in place |
| Emergency Lighting | 1090 |
| Fire Alarm | 1240 |
| Lifts | 335 |
| Sprinkler Systems | 17 |

6. Summary

The OPW Preventative Maintenance approach can be split into two distinct areas; a) building fabric and b) mechanical and electrical services. The building fabric works are delivered through the eight Regional Offices nationwide. A prioritization approach is used, taking into account the needs of the estate portfolio, the availability of resources and the distribution of the budget allocations. The mechanical and electrical planning is delivered through a central helpdesk approach with multiple contract types in place to satisfy statutory obligations.

Given the age and general condition of the State's portfolio, a substantial budget for reactive maintenance is allocated annually, to ensure the buildings remain fit for purpose and fully available for occupation. Strategic approaches are being developed for managing property maintenance, with a greater emphasis on planned and preventative maintenance programmes, in order to reduce the requirement for reactive maintenance.

The OPW is continuing to make improvements in the delivery of its maintenance services. Discussions are ongoing between DPENDPDR, OPW and other key stakeholders to replace DPENDPDR Circular 1 of 2013 with a new DPENDPDR Circular.

Request 2 - The total cost to date of the ten flood relief capital projects which were ongoing in 2021, and an update on how many of them are complete (pgs. 18-19).

The total cost to date (end of 2022) and the current status of the ten flood relief schemes at construction in 2021 is outlined in the table below;

| Ten schemes at Construction in 2021 | Spend to 31/12/22 | Current Status |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Ashbourne, Co. Meath | €9m | Substantially complete in 2022 |
| Athlone, Co. Westmeath | €15.9m | due to reach substantial completion 2024 |
| Clonakilty, Co. Cork | €30.7m | Substantially complete in 2021 |
| Douglas, Co. Cork | €22.4m | Substantially complete in 2022 |
| Ennis Lower, Co. Clare | €19.4m | Substantially complete in 2021 |
| Ennis South, Co. Clare | €18.2m | Substantially complete in 2021 |
| Lower Morell, Co. Kildare | €6.9m | due to reach substantial completion 2025 |
| River Dodder, Dublin | €21.1m | due to reach substantial completion 2023 |
| Springfield, Co. Clare | €3.4m | due to reach substantial completion 2023 |
| Templemore (River Mall), Co. Tipperary | €14m | due to reach substantial completion 2023 |

Request 3 - The cost of the customs facility in Rosslare Europort (pg. 22).

As a consequence of the UK's decision to leave the EU, the infrastructure developed by OPW, acting on an agency basis, for the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine and the Department of Health/HSE, was required to conduct checks and controls. Compliance with the Union Customs Code (UCC) remains a key driver for the need for permanent state infrastructure within Rosslare Europort and my Office is playing a key role to ensure that this infrastructure is put in place. Border control posts must be located within the customs controlled area at the point of entry.

To date, OPW has been working in close collaboration with relevant Government Departments, State Agencies and Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail on the project milestones that have been achieved to date. This includes securing planning permission from Wexford County Council in November 2021, the development of detailed tender documentation and its subsequent publication on eTenders to the market. This project tender deadline was 10 March 2023.

The tender evaluation process is at a critical juncture at this point and in view of this, the total project budget is commercially sensitive at this point in time.

The project consists of the construction of Rosslare Europort Terminal 7 and Enabling Works and a new Border Control Post. This project is to develop the necessary permanent infrastructure at Rosslare Europort to comply with customs, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and official food controls as a consequence of Brexit. The works will comprise of the demolition of existing buildings and construction of new permanent buildings totaling circa 9,361 m². These buildings include facilities such as An Garda Síochána Immigration facility, a Revenue Enforcement and Stopping Area, live animal inspection facilities for equine and domestic pets, checks on animal products, regulated plant products and high-risk foods of non-animal origin entering the Union. There is also a new main access road, a roundabout, internal road and freight entrance plaza along with significant hard-standing and truck-set / car-storage facilities to be constructed.

Significant enabling works on behalf of Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail have been factored into the overall plan, as parts of the proposed site for the permanent infrastructure are in use by the Port. The enabling works will provide for the relocation of activities within the Port and facilitate the release of the permanent site for the new facilities. It is important that the ongoing operational activities of the Port can continue uninterrupted while construction work is underway and that the impact on the Ports' future business development is minimised.

This project will be primarily funded under the EU's Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) which aims to provide financial support to the most affected Member States, regions and sectors to deal with the adverse consequence of Brexit. To comply with the requirements of the BAR Regulation the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform is the Designated Body responsible for the management and oversight of BAR funding.

The evaluation process and recommendation to the relevant Government Departments and State Agencies has been commenced by OPW. In view of the scale of this project, a Memo for Government will be brought seeking approval prior to the award of the contract.

Request 3a - The correspondence the OPW has had from TII and the other stakeholders on preparing the (Rosslare) facility

OPW has had ongoing communication and liaison with all stakeholders in the development of the brief of requirements for this project, the lodgment and successful receipt of planning permission from Wexford County Council, the development of the detailed tender documentation, including close liaison with CIE to ensure the continued operation of the port during construction works, the publication of the tender on e-tenders and the continuing communication involved in the evaluation and assessment of the tender process. Client Departments include the Revenue Commissioners, Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Department of Health/HSE and the Department of Transport as the parent Department of Iarnród Éireann/CIE and TII.

To illustrate this communication, the State facility at Kilrane, adjacent to Rosslare Europort, will shortly provide additional parking for HGV drivers to rest up prior to accessing the port. This is in response to HGVs parking on the roadside including in residential areas giving rise to safety and nuisance issues. The Department of Transport has since agreed with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Revenue Commissioners, and the HSE that 10 HGV parking spaces will be provided on part of the Kilrane site for this purpose and funding was approved.

Request 4 - The location of the monitoring station which did not work during the flooding of Bridgetown, Co. Wexford on Christmas Day 2021 (pgs. 24-25).

- The flooding in Bridgetown was the result of an intense and extreme rainfall event, and was in no way connected to the functioning of a water monitoring station.
- Intense rainfall events coupled with a lack of natural attenuation when lands are saturated during the winter months leads to high flow through Bridgetown, Co Wexford. The river is also under tidal influence from its outfall at Blackstone, near Duncormick, to as far upstream as Bridgetown itself. Varying local conditions can push the tidal influence even further upstream, such as wind strength and direction, and the tidal cycle itself.
- There are flood embankments downstream of Bridgetown to prevent tides entering the land to the south of the channel. The lands behind the embankments drain via a network of channels to the OPW pump station at Cull. Much of this land is below sea level. In most circumstances, all the water in this area is pumped to sea at the Cull pump station. When the water level is very high, some discharges are through a sluice house at Kilmore Quay, through an artificial channel to the sea. The levels in the artificial channel at Cull are monitored on a constant basis and the pumps operate automatically in cycles to manage the water level within the normal range. In an extreme flood, additional water is stored in the drainage channels and on adjacent land until it can be pumped out, which may take several days. This automated system functioned as designed on Christmas Day, 2021.
- The Bridgetown December 2021 event was the result of very intense and extreme rainfall. High intensity events of a short duration are by their nature very difficult to predict.
- The OPW operates two monitoring stations in the vicinity of Ballyteigue lough, one of which is located at the Cull Pump House (Stn.13081) and is monitoring the water levels in the drainage channel behind the sea defences. This station operated normally throughout the event.
- <https://waterlevel.ie/0000013081/>
- The second OPW station is a temporary gauge at Ballyteigue Bay (Stn.13063) for a research project. The station was only recently installed in December 2022 and is due to be reviewed/removed shortly. The data will be used to characterise the tidal regime in Ballyteigue Bay.
- In July 2022, some €157,000 was approved under the OPW's Minor Works Scheme for Wexford County Council to install flood gates on affected and at risk properties. These were delivered from December 2022 and are being installed between January and March 2023 for all 48 properties in this initial scheme.
- In October 2022 Wexford County Council requested some €70,000 for the cost

of a feasibility study for Bridgetown. This was approved by OPW in December 2022 and the consultant was appointed in January 2023.

- The river at Bridgetown forms part of the Ballyteige/ Kilmore Arterial Drainage Scheme. Access for maintenance had been restricted but OPW and Wexford County Council have since identified suitable access and works were completed in 2022.
- The OPW operates nearly 500 water level monitoring stations at river, lake and tidal locations nationwide. New stations are installed each year to support the implementation of flood relief schemes associated with national flood risk management objectives. Water level data from the vast majority of these stations is available in real time (at 15 minute intervals or less) on the web portal.
- Archive hydrometric data is available on the national hydrometric archive website at www.waterlevel.ie.
- Both web portals are used widely by the OPW, Local Authorities, Waterways Ireland, the Electricity Supply Board and the Environmental Protection Agency. The data is available to assist with the response and management of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. The public and the media also recognise the portals as a valuable source of information on hydrometric data.

Request 7 - A briefing note on the modular housing site in Rathdowney, including the size of the site, the relevant plans for the site, and the timeline for locating the first group there (pg. 38).

- The Rathdowney site has been identified for Rapid Delivery modular housing.
- The development will include 42 rapid delivery modular homes on a site with an area of circa 2 hectares.
- Site investigations works have been completed. DCEDIY / OPW have engaged with the Local Authority, Local Councillors and general public.
- Site works commenced on 27th March 2023, with the first rapid build homes expected to be delivered during mid-summer 2023.

Background

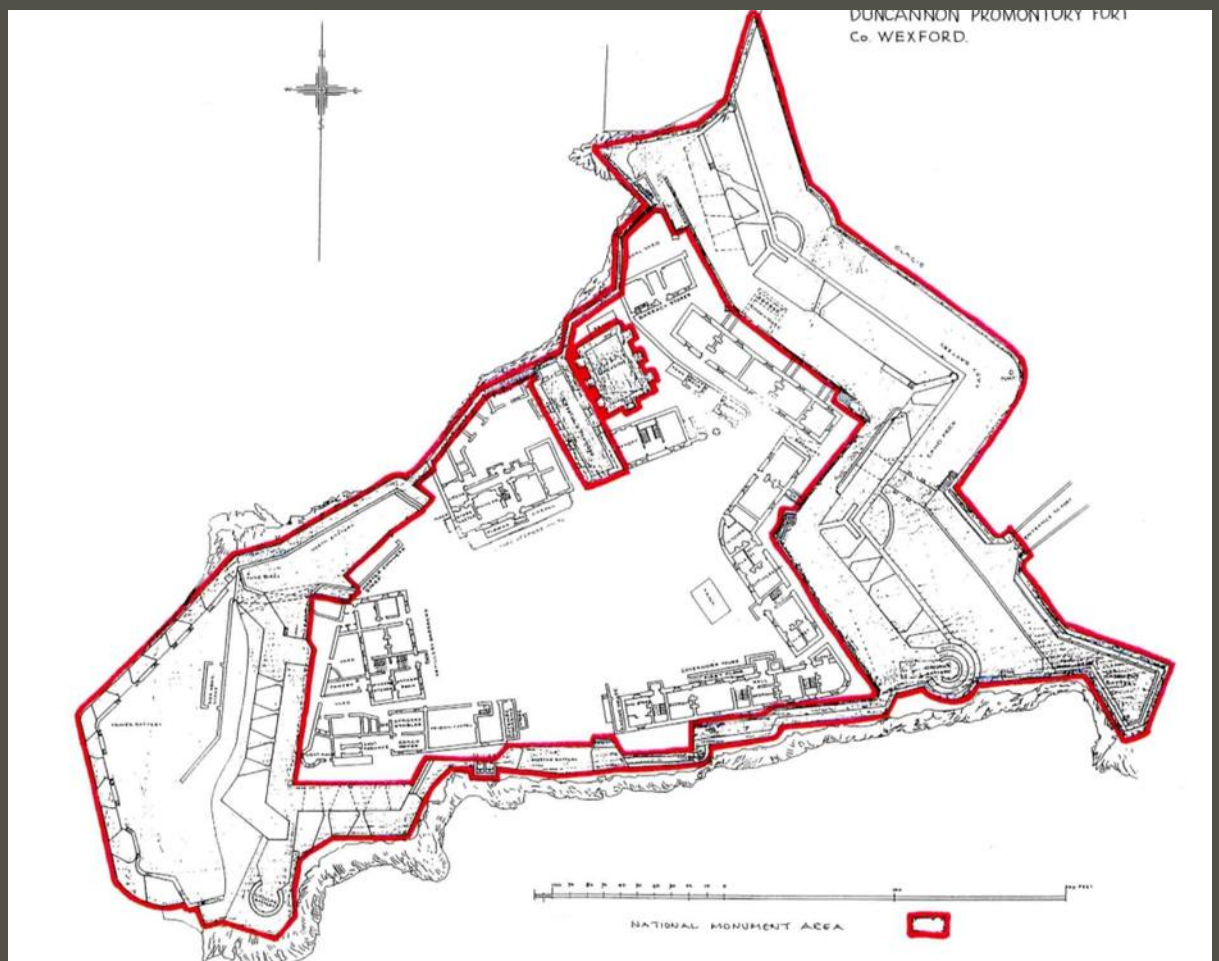
- The overall objective of the Rapid Build Housing Programme is to install 700 units during 2023, with the capacity to accommodate 2,800 Ukrainian nationals. The phased installation of units to site and their occupation is scheduled to begin in late April, according as site-enabling works are completed.

Timeframes for Programme Rollout and locations confirmed to date

- At present, 7 sites are progressing for development. The main contractor is already on site in Cork, Thurles, Cavan, Claremorris, Sligo, Clonminch, and Rathdowney.
- Further sites that have been identified by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are being assessed by DCEDIY and by the OPW to establish their suitability and technical viability.

Request 8 - A note on the OPW's interaction with the local authority in relation to proposals for Duncannon Fort (pgs. 47-48).

- Duncannon Fort is a monument of major historical importance, not alone for Duncannon itself and County Wexford but for the whole country. While the entirety of the site is in the ownership of Wexford County Council, parts of the Fort, considered to be areas of national importance due to their rarity, historical, architectural and archaeological interest, were taken into State Guardianship in 1998 and designated as a National Monument under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004.
- Two of the buildings within the grounds of the Fort – the magazine and armory – plus the walls and the defences of the Fort are in State guardianship and entrusted to the care of the Office of Public Works (OPW). The area between the red lines on the map included herewith denote the sections in State care. The Office of Public Works has responsibility for the fabric maintenance of these areas. The rest of the site is owned and managed by the local authority.
- The Office of Public Works National Monuments (Conservation) division maintains long-standing and regular contact with Wexford County Council as to the conservation of the site.
- This includes, inter alia, consultation in relation to the preparation of a Conservation Plan for Duncannon Fort in 2016, which was part-funded by the Heritage Council, and most recently in respect of the successful funding application made by the local authority for a masterplan and refurbishment works through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.
- OPW National Monuments (Conservation) will remain in regular correspondence with Wexford County Council as to the progression of the necessary preparations for works at Duncannon Fort, which are subject to Ministerial Consent from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- As with previous occasions where maintenance issues relating to the fabric of the parts of Duncannon Fort in State care are concerned, OPW will ensure that the necessary conservation and remediation works are carried out.



Request 9 - A note including, (1) The number of OPW-owned buildings that should be sold (2) How long these buildings have been owned (3) An assessment in each case as to whether they can be repurposed, and (4) The energy ratings of the buildings (pg. 49).

Regarding vacant properties in the OPW's ownership:

The Office of Public Works (OPW) manages a property portfolio in excess of 2,500 properties ranging from heritage buildings, commercial office blocks, green field sites, warehouses, Coast Guard Stations and Garda Stations. As would be the norm in such a large portfolio, at any given time, there will be a number of properties being refurbished or vacant. The State will always retain a number of vacant properties for future use. As a matter of policy, no property or site is disposed of until there is absolute certainty that there is no alternative State use for that property.

OPW's policy with regard to surplus, unassigned State property is to:

- Identify if the property is required/suitable for alternative State use by either Government Departments or the wider public sector.
- If there is no other State use identified for a property, the OPW will then consider disposing of the property on the open market, subject to prevailing market conditions, in order to generate revenue for the Exchequer.
- If no State requirement is identified or if a decision is taken not to dispose of a particular property, the OPW may consider community involvement (subject to a detailed written submission, which would indicate that the community/voluntary group has the means to insure, maintain and manage the property and that there are no ongoing costs for the Exchequer).

In relation to potential alternative uses such as housing, the OPW notifies all relevant stakeholders of any vacant, surplus properties that may be considered for housing or other State use. This includes notifying the Land Development Agency and the relevant local authorities or other State bodies.

While the provision of social/affordable and emergency residential accommodation is a function of the Local Authorities and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), the OPW has in recent years provided:

- Eight residential units in Dublin City Centre that were transferred to Dublin City Council for use by the Peter McVerry Trust.
- A building in Crumlin, Dublin that is now licensed to Dublin City Council for use as a Family Hub.
- Five former Garda residences in Templemore that were transferred to Tipperary County Council for social housing.

- Two former Garda station properties at Goleen and Adrigole that were transferred to Cork County Council for social housing.

In addition, the properties listed below are in the process of being transferred to local authorities and the Land Development Agency:

- The former Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum which will be transferring to the Land Development Agency for housing purposes.
- Seven former Coastguard Cottages and a site in Crosshaven that are transferring to Cork County Council for social housing.
- Two former Garda residences are transferring to Tipperary County Council for social housing.
- A property at Carrigrohane, Cork City that is in the process of being leased to Cork City Council for housing purposes.
- Two former Garda station properties at Dromahair and Keshcarrigan are in the process of being leased to Leitrim County Council for community purposes.
- The former Garda station in Moyvane which is in the process of being transferred to Kerry County Council for use under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.
- The former Garda station in Cloghan, Co. Donegal which is in the process of being leased to Donegal County Council for not for profit community purposes.

The OPW has also transferred the following properties to local authorities for community use under the town and village renewal scheme:

- Two former Garda station properties at Tarmonbarry and Ballintubber which transferred to Roscommon County Council.
- The former Garda station in Ashford which transferred to Wicklow County Council.

The OPW has provided a list of its vacant properties to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, the DHLGH and the relevant local authorities so that they can assess them for suitability for humanitarian housing purposes.

It should be noted that buildings owned or managed by the OPW are primarily commercial offices, Garda stations, warehouses or others that are not suited to residential use. Many of these properties have been deemed unsuitable as they were constructed over 50 years ago and would require significant investment to comply with current regulations for residential use or located in rural areas without the necessary services and supports.

A list of the vacant properties currently owned or managed by the OPW and the current status of each is attached at **Appendix 1**. BER (energy) ratings for these properties have also been included, where available. It should be noted that BER ratings for vacant properties are normally provided when properties are being prepared for disposal.

Request 10 - What percentage of the budget for flood works is spent on coastal flood defense (pg. 51).

- Under the National Development Plan the Government has allocated €1.3bn to design and construct some 150 additional flood relief schemes to protect those communities, assessed to be at risk from significant flood events. Some 60 (40%) of the additional schemes identified are for coastal communities. Proportionally these schemes will equate to approximately €500m of the funding allocation.
- The Minor Flood Mitigation Works & Coastal Protection Scheme (the “Minor Works Scheme”) was introduced by the Office of Public Works in 2009. The purpose of the scheme is to provide funding to Local Authorities to undertake minor flood mitigation works or studies to address localised flooding and coastal protection problems within their administrative areas. The scheme generally applies where a solution can be readily identified and achieved in a short time frame. Under the scheme, applications are considered for projects that are estimated to cost not more than €750,000 in each instance. Funding of up to 90% of the cost is available from the OPW for approved projects. The commencement and progression of any works for which funding is approved is a matter for each Local Authority concerned. Funding of €14m was approved under the Minor Works & Coastal Protection Scheme since 2009 which related to coastal locations.
- Local Authorities are responsible for coastal erosion in their own areas. The Local Authorities may carry out coastal protection works using their own resources. If necessary, they may also put forward proposals to the relevant Government Departments for funding of appropriate measures. Intervention or hard defences has the potential to cause problems further along the coast, any proposed intervention measures are best developed in conjunction with a formal coastal risk management study that has carefully investigated the problem and explored the full range of management options.
- To assist Local Authorities in managing the coastline for coastal erosion, the OPW has undertaken a national assessment of coastal erosion (including erosion rates) under the Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study (ICPSS) and the results of this study have been published on the OPW website floodinfo.ie. This data enables Local Authorities to develop appropriate plans and strategies for the sustainable management of the coastline in their counties.
- The Government has established an Inter-Departmental Group on Managing Coastal Change to scope out an approach for the development of a national co-ordinated and integrated strategy to manage the projected impact of coastal change to our coastal communities. The Inter-Departmental Group is jointly chaired by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the OPW and will bring forward options and recommendations for the Government to consider.

Request 11 - A note on any works undertaken by the OPW, in relation to biodiversity or otherwise, at Heywood Gardens and Emo Court (pgs. 55-56).

- The Office of Public Works launched our Biodiversity Action Strategy 2022-2026 last year.
- This strategy sets out OPW's intention for protecting, promoting and enhancing biodiversity across its operations. It identifies strategic actions to help to deliver Government policy through contribution to the delivery of the National Biodiversity Action Plan. This Action Plan will be key to planning works at all of our Heritage Services sites across the country, including Heywood Gardens and Emo Court.
- On specific works in Heywood gardens, there are ongoing works to restore the original landscape. This necessitated the removal of a number of sally trees near the lake. This work was carried out outside of nesting times to minimise the impact on the biodiversity of the site. In order to improve road safety, OPW worked with Laois County Council to remove some tree stumps which were causing a blind spot for motorists. As part of these works, the area where the stumps were removed from had grass laid and some ivy was removed from a heritage wall, which is now visible. To address further safety concerns, some trees by the river bank were thinned to improve visibility for people walking by the river.
- OPW plan to replant native trees to replace the Sitka Spruce that was at Heywood. This involves transplanting beech saplings from Heywood Gardens. They are removed intact from where they grew from seed naturally and then dispersed around the Site.
- There are no pesticides used in the Romantic Landscape, with limited spraying of the paths in the Lutyens Garden. The roses are managed naturally without pesticides. In Heywood Gardens, ivy grows in abundance, which is a great food source for bees. We only remove ivy that is choking trees. Across Heywood Gardens, log piles are left to encourage insects and wildlife and leaves are not gathered as hedgehogs hibernate in them. Some grasslands are allowed to develop into meadows with annual cutting.
- Emo Court is taking part in a baseline habitat and species survey in 2023. The survey will consist of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal as outlined in CIEEM (2017) to identify and map habitats and species on site, to assess their conservation value, identify species of conservation concern and record the management status of the species and habitats. In addition, the consultant will be asked to provide site-specific management recommendations to ensure that biodiversity aspects of the site are protected, and where possible, improved.
- In relation to ongoing works, there has been some management of Cherry Laurel, an invasive species at Emo Court. This has focused on ensuring a wide range of biodiversity on this site. Where these have been removed, other trees have begun to be transplanted into this. Near the car park area, over 100 native trees have been planted. There is ongoing management of the Laurel hedgerow which have been double row planted. Some of this has been replanted to fill in gaps in other areas while some which had become woody have been removed. While a bull dozer has not been

used at Emo Court, a digger has been used to remove tree stumps and a long reach digger to remove cut reeds from the lake.

- The priority for managing the land at Emo Court is to promote biodiversity and to preserve and conserve the historic landscape.

Request 12 - A briefing note on the Mountmellick flood relief scheme, including an updated estimate figure for the project (pgs. 59-60).

- Mountmellick lies to the east of the Slieve Bloom Mountains and to the south of the River Barrow, within north County Laois. A number of rivers pass through and around the town, making it vulnerable to flooding from the Owenass and Pound Rivers and their tributaries. Very significant flooding occurred in November 2017, when the rivers burst their banks, causing flooding to property, roads and fields and necessitating the evacuation of a number of housing estates.
- In October 2019, Laois County Council working with the OPW appointed consultants (JBA) to design the Mountmellick Flood Relief Scheme on the basis of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study. As part of the design for the scheme, Modelling work undertaken by JBA identified the necessity for the scheme to be re-evaluated, the scheme area to be extended and the replacement of the Owenass Bridge. The design of the Owenass Bridge was not envisaged as part of the original scope of the project and has contributed to the extended programme. The hydrology and hydraulics modelling work undertaken for the scheme has become increasingly complicated as issues of cross flows between water courses were identified after Storms Ciara and Dennis. The project budget for the Mountmellick scheme is €3.1m.
- The scheme development for Mountmellick is progressing, and the scheme is expected to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála for planning in Q1 2024. Subject to planning approval (expected Q4 2024), Laois County Council envisages that construction for the Mountmellick Flood Relief Scheme will commence in Q1 2025 and that construction will be complete in Q3 2026.
- The OPW notes that Laois County Council continues to implement comprehensive drainage maintenance works in and downstream of Mountmellick. This has ensured additional capacity for the conveyance of flood waters, acknowledging that such works are not a replacement for a Flood Relief Scheme.
- In parallel, grant supports, whereby Laois County Council offers a 50% grant for individual property, demountable flood protection barriers, are still available. 58 demountable barriers have been purchased to date through this Scheme. Further details for this grant are available from Laois County Council's Capital Projects Office.

Request 13 - A note on the site on Mountrath Road, Portlaoise, including its current status and whether it can be used (pgs. 60-61).

Following engagement with local authority officials and the Housing Agency, it was confirmed that the site on Mountrath Road was not available because of alternative potential uses being considered. Therefore, the site on Mountrath Road, Portlaoise is not included in this programme.

| Former Garda Stations Closed Under the 2012 and 2013 Policing Plans - Being prepared for disposal or alternative use (30) | | | | | |
|---|---------|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| | County | Garda Station | Status | Number of years each unit has been vacant | BER Energy Rating |
| 1 | Clare | Broadford | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 9 | D2 |
| 2 | Clare | Doonbeg | Sale agreed | 9 | F (MQ), G (GS) |
| 3 | Clare | Lahinch | Sale agreed | 9 | G |
| 4 | Cork | Ballyfeard | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 10 | G |
| 5 | Cork | Ballygurteen | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 10 | G |
| 6 | Cork | Knocknagree | Under consideration for community use | 10 | G |
| 7 | Donegal | Malin | Intra State transfer to Donegal County Council | 9 | G (MQ) E2 (GS) |
| 8 | Donegal | Na Brocacha / Cloghan | Under consideration for Lease to Donegal Co Co (community use) | 9 | F (MQ) D1 (GS) |
| 9 | Dublin | Dalkey | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 10 | Protected Structure - BER not required |
| 10 | Dublin | Kill O The Grange | Intra State transfer to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council | 9 | G |
| 11 | Galway | Ballymoe | Under consideration for community use | 9 | Exempt <50sm |
| 12 | Galway | Kiltullagh | Being prepared for disposal - 2023. Title issues to be resolved. | 9 | D1 (MQ) E2 (GS) |
| 13 | Kerry | Brosna | Being prepared for disposal - 2024 | 9 | Protected Structure - BER not required |
| 14 | Kerry | Moyvane | Sale agreed (Intra State transfer to Kerry County Council) | 10 | G (MQ) G (GS) |
| 15 | Leitrim | Dromahair | Final lease has issued to Leitrim County Council for execution (community use) | 9 | G (MQ) F (GS) |
| 16 | Leitrim | Keshcarrigan | Final lease has issued to Leitrim County Council for execution (community use) | 9 | Protected Structure - BER not required |

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------|--------------------|--|----|--|
| 17 | Limerick | Castletown Conyers | Being prepared for disposal - 2023. Title issues to be resolved. | 9 | Not available |
| 18 | Limerick | Galbally | Intra State transfer to Limerick City and County Council | 9 | F (MQ) G (GS) |
| 19 | Limerick | Kilfinane | Being prepared for disposal - 2023. Title issues to be resolved. | 9 | Protected Structure - BER not required |
| 20 | Limerick | Shanagolden | Intra State transfer to Limerick City and County Council | 10 | Protected Structure - BER not required |
| 21 | Longford | Ardagh | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 9 | Protected Structure - BER not required |
| 22 | Longford | Ballinalee | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 9 | G |
| 23 | Mayo | Bellacorrick | Alternative State use being examined | 10 | G |
| 24 | Mayo | Ballycastle | Alternative State use being examined | 9 | Not available |
| 25 | Mayo | Glenisland | Alternative State use being examined | 10 | Not available |
| 26 | Monaghan | Newbliss | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 9 | G (MQ) E1 (GS) |
| 27 | Roscommon | Ballyforan | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 9 | G |
| 28 | Roscommon | Knockcroghery | Alternative State use being examined - National Parks and Wildlife Service | 9 | G |
| 29 | Sligo | Cliffoney | Being prepared for disposal - 2023 | 9 | E1 |
| 30 | Wicklow | Hollywood | Being prepared for disposal - 2023. Title issues to be resolved. | 9 | G |
| Other Former Garda Stations (6) | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| 1 | Donegal | Bunbeg | Under consideration by Donegal County Council | 14 | G |
| 2 | Donegal | Buncrana | Intra State transfer to Donegal County Council | 15 | D1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|------------------|---|----|--|
| 3 | Kilkenny | Castlecomer | Intra State transfer to Kilkenny County Council | 21 | Protected Structure - BER not required |
| 4 | Limerick | Mayorstone Drive | Alternative State use being examined | 16 | F |
| 5 | Sligo | Ballymote | Being prepared for disposal | 13 | E1 |
| 6 | Wexford | Roche's Road | Sale Agreed | 5 | C1 (GS) C3 (Sergeants Office) |

Dáil Standing Order 218(2)

An Coiste um Chuntais Phoiblí
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Template

Instructions

Please complete this template for each ex-post review of expenditure completed since 2015. Please include hyperlinks to the reviews where possible and otherwise provide the reviews in soft copy.

VFM Information

| | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Title of ex-post review of expenditure | Analysis of OPW Spending on State Rents | Type of review: | Spending Review |
| Accounting period(s) to which it relates: | 2017 | Authored by: | Patricia Ballantine & Áine Mannion |
| Related review(s) previously undertaken: | Not applicable | Started: | 2017 |
| Quantum of expenditure covered by review: | €96m | Completed: | 2018 |
| % of total voted expenditure covered by review: | 24% | Expenditure type: | Current Non Pay |
| Programme line(s): | Estate Management | Relevant subhead(s): | B8 Rents |
| % of total programme expenditure: | 26% | If the review is reflected in a Public Service Performance Report, please provide year and page number: | |

VFM details

Objectives:

Analysis of OPW spending on State Rents

Findings

- State rents are the largest item of expenditure on the OPW Vote.
- As a result of a decision to realign the issuing of rental payments with the four largest quarterly lease gale dates, expenditure on rent was €149m in 2009 against an allocation of €130m.
- Expenditure was reduced to €98m by 2013 due to the OPW Rationalisation Programme.
- 2015 saw the lowest expenditure on rent of €87m but this was partly accounted for by the fact that the service charges moved to Subhead B9 from 2015.
- At year end 2017 the OPW had 347 leases covering 40% of office accommodation

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Actions taken:

- Pressures at the time included increase in market rents and lifting of moratorium, lack of office supply, Brexit energy efficiency and client behavior
- Gaps in terms of of the data that is available and easily accessible.
- It is responsibility of Client Organisations to assist the OPW in the collection of the relevant data that is held by Clients, i.e. numbers & location of staff.
- The introduction of an Integrated Workplace Management System (IWMS) will facilitate the accessibility of data across all Business Units of the OPW and will facilitate further analysis in the future
- The acquisition of property (purchase or lease) is carried out in accordance with the Public Spending Code thereby ensuring value for money is achieved.
- A Spending Review on the Assessment of the Balance of Current and Capital Expenditure: OPW Estate Management Portfolio was carried out by the OPW in conjunction with IGEES and was published in 2022.



OPW Oifig na
nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

Value for Money Review

March 2023

Introduction

In meeting its role and responsibilities, the OPW ensures that its investments provide value for money through an evidence-based approach, robust procurement strategies, economic assessments of investments in all new schemes, and the most efficient delivery models, including through OPW's own direct labour teams.

These methods are either specific value for money exercises or form part of other reviews and audit processes. This approach allows specific topics be examined in detail as well as being considered along with other important considerations such as governance or legal requirements for example.

To summarise the main methods the OPW review and ensure value for money is as follows,

- Specific expenditure reviews and value for money exercises either in conjunction with IGEES or carried out internally by the OPW. Four examples of these are provided on the template sent out.
- Value for Money is considered at the various approval stages of projects/programmes over €500k in value in line with the Public Spending Code as projects progress through their project life cycle.
- Audits within the Internal Audit Programme include value for money considerations as part of their audits and recommendations.
- Post Project Reviews as part of the public spending code.

The OPW has two main programmes under its remit, Flood Risk Management and Estate Management including Heritage Services.

To date, in Flood Risk Management the OPW has invested €540m in some 53 completed flood relief schemes, providing protection to over 12,200 properties and an economic benefit to the State in damage and losses avoided, estimated to be in the region of €1.9 billion.

In relation to arterial drainage maintenance, a 2013 benchmarking exercise showed that the cost of delivering channel maintenance using the OPW's direct labour model was €4.14 per metre as against a cost for the average of the tenders (if outsourced) of €7.18 per metre. (For further information, see the attached template, 'Arterial Drainage Maintenance by Direct Labour Benchmarking'.)

In Estate Management the OPW has participated in two IGEES led reviews into the management of the state office building portfolio. In addition, each project/programme is appraised in accordance with the principles of the Public Spending Code to ensure value for money is achieved.

1. **Do you have a systematic/cyclical approach to choosing areas/programmes/expenditure to review? If so, please describe the approach in detail.**
2. **How and why you choose particular areas/programmes/expenditure to review?**

Flood Relief Schemes

In 2010, the OPW undertook the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme. This engineering-led Programme assessed the flood risk for 300 communities that are home to two thirds of Ireland's population and represent 80% of the potential flood risk in the country. The CFRAM Programme, completed in 2018, was the first in a six-year cycle of review, assessment and plan-development to manage Ireland's flood risk in accordance with the EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC).

The CFRAM Programme gives a clear and comprehensive picture of areas of potentially significant flood risk and sets out how to manage the flood risk effectively and sustainably. This evidence-based process, which included extensive public consultation, led to the development of 29 Flood Risk Management Plans. These Plans set out the proposed measures, both structural and non-structural, to manage the flood risk in each of the 300 communities assessed. The Plans were launched by An Taoiseach in May 2018.

At that time (May 2018), the Plans identified an additional 120 flood relief schemes for the country that, together with the 42 schemes already complete and 33 schemes underway, would protect 95% of at risk properties.

Since May 2018, the OPW has trebled the number of schemes at design and construction to 90. To support that scale of investment, the Government has allocated €1.3bn to flood relief under the National Development Plan as part of Project Ireland 2040.

The OPW has developed robust processes to inform this investment and to ensure that value for money is achieved, including through:

- processes and procedures that ensure compliance with the requirements of the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) for public sector construction projects and with the Public Spending Code,
- procurement strategy and appropriate frameworks for the delivery of the programme of schemes at design and construction, as well as a detailed assessment of the project-specific requirements to ensure that the services procured mitigate against unforeseen costs,
- enhanced project-management skillsets across the OPW and the Local Authorities to better manage contracts,

- Full economic appraisals using Cost Benefit Analysis at each of the Decision Gateways under the Public Spending Code. All economic appraisals of flood relief schemes are carried out in line with a Technical Guidance Note.¹
- schemes designed to be adaptable in the future to the increased risk of climate change,
- extensive public consultation to inform schemes' design and construction and to create opportunities for societal benefits and environmental enhancements arising from the schemes' completion,
- integrating schemes' design and delivery with other public bodies, to minimise the disruption and overall costs of public-sector investment, and ensuring the societal benefits from flood relief schemes are optimised through the inclusion of public realm opportunities,
- Sharing of properties protected with Insurance Ireland in line with Government Policy. In that way, flood insurance has been returned to up to 94% of properties in benefitting areas.

Constructing schemes is through either OPW's own direct workforce or by contractor. At present, there are 7 Flood Relief Schemes at construction stage; 6 of these are via a direct-managed model by the OPW. A review of this delivery model shows that it provides a more flexible and lower-cost approach to construction. (For further information, see the attached template, 'Direct Labour Scheme'.)

Arterial Drainage Maintenance

Under the Arterial Drainage Act 1945, the OPW completed 34 Arterial Drainage Schemes on river catchments along with 5 estuarine embankment schemes. While new Arterial Drainage Schemes are no longer undertaken, the OPW has a statutory duty to maintain the schemes that have been completed in proper repair and effective condition, i.e. to the standard of protection for the scheme.

Today, the OPW's annual arterial drainage maintenance works programme provides drainage outfall for 260,000 hectares (650,000 acres) of agricultural lands, comprises 11,500km (7,150 miles) of river channel and approximately 796km (500 miles) of embankments, and offers a level of protection from flooding to urban areas, including critical infrastructure, encompassing in excess of 20,000 properties. The OPW has an ongoing five-year cyclical programme of maintenance.

¹ See <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b15dd0-technical-specifications-and-guidance-notes/>.

Estate Management

Expenditure Reviews pertaining to Estate Management are decided in conjunction with the OPW Vote Section of DPENDPDR. In recent years, two major expenditure reviews have been completed.

- Analysis of State Rents (Circa €100m per annum)
- An Assessment of the Balance of Current and Capital Expenditure: OPW Estate Management Portfolio

These specific reviews are further supplemented by regular reviews of expenditure by,

- Business unit specific processes and procedures that ensure compliance with the requirements of the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) for public sector construction projects and with the Public Spending Code.
- The procurement strategy which provides appropriate frameworks for the delivery of a programme of schemes at design and construction and a detailed assessment of the project-specific requirements to ensure that the services procured mitigate against unforeseen costs. The nature of the OPW work means often large framework agreements are put in place to allow the OPW met public procurement regulations. These frameworks are set up to offer operational efficiency while delivering value for money for the taxpayer.
- Enhanced project-management, technical, professional skillsets across the OPW. External consultants with the required professional skillsets and contractors are procured using a MEAT incorporating quality assessment criteria. This focus ultimately delivers value for money in the total life cycle costs.
- Quality management system EN ISO 9001 2015: also support delivering of value for money and best practice.
- Robust appraisals at each of the Decision Gateways under the Public Spending Code for selected projects/programmes, including Multi Criteria Analysis, Cost Benefit Analysis or Cost Effectiveness Appraisals. All economic appraisals are carried out in line with expenditure thresholds and central guidance.
- Rely on value for money recommendations from the OCAG and the OPW's internal audit function arising from their various audits.

3. Do you have a schedule of planned reviews? If so, covering what period, and at what level is it signed off?
4. The governance arrangements pertaining to the implementation of the recommendations arising from the reviews.
5. For each of the reviews for the accounting period under examination by the Committee and the preceding two years: • details of implementation to date, • timelines for implementation.

6. What specific effects have the implementation of the recommendations or conclusions of each review undertaken in the last seven years had in terms of the allocation of funding within the Vote(s)?

Flood Relief Schemes

Designing and delivering flood relief schemes takes many years, is a highly complex and specialised area of capital investment, entailing ongoing assessments, reviews, and appraisals. Scheme design also has to ensure that, by solving the flood risk in one area, it does not create a knock-on risk elsewhere.

The OPW has invested in project-management capacity and capabilities to improve its overall project and programme delivery. Monthly Steering Group meetings for each project provide the governance structures and follow consistent processes and procedures to monitor schemes' performance against planned programme and budget.

At a programme level, the OPW holds frequent senior flood risk management meetings to review overall performance and governance. It has developed an internal Data hub, which interrogates the overall programme of schemes and acts as an early warning system for corrective actions to be addressed, if required. Examples would include application of the CBA methodology that resulted in a revised guidance note issuing for all flood relief schemes and mitigating project extensions due to localised decisions for planning permission for ground investigations works as part of the scheme design. It also provides informative data on scheme costs and timeframes, which can help inform investment in future schemes.

Budgeting for flood relief schemes is complex and iterative through all five stages. The most accurate estimate can only be achieved following the awarding of a contract for construction. However, due to the Public Forms of Contracts, OPW must enter into fixed priced lump sum contracts with contractors. By their nature flood relief schemes carry many contingencies and allowances for the 'known unknowns', such as ground conditions, archaeological mitigation and landowner agreements – but which are not possible to clearly estimate for any scheme at the outset. The OPW plans to engage with the Office of Government Procurement to identify if a more suitable form of contract can be developed specifically for flood relief schemes, given their complexity.

In OPW, monthly expenditure reviews and meetings of monitoring committees for the A5 and A6 subheads take place. The Expenditure Monitoring Committee (EMC) is chaired by the Director of Flood Risk Management Services and comprises the relevant Budget holders, sub-Budget Holders and Profile Officers. The purpose of the committee includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Oversight and management of expenditure, including the early consideration of projected savings or overruns,

- Consideration and submission of funding requirements on an annual basis, including the identification of future potential financial risks,
- Oversight of governance for scheme delivery.

The Finance Unit of OPW is represented at all EMC meetings. The Finance Unit reports to the OPW Chairman and Management Board on a monthly basis on meetings held and any significant outcomes, including variances against the agreed budget.

In relation to procurement for consultants and contractors, the OPW continually updates its tender specifications based on lessons learned. Specifically, the OPW has developed a Template Consultants' Project Brief for Engineering and Environmental Consultancy Services, which is used for the appointment of consultants on flood relief projects and is updated periodically based on lessons learned. Prior to tendering, the OPW also initiates third-party peer reviews of tender documentation to better inform the details of the services required and reduce the opportunity for claims.

Since the publication of the revised Public Spending Code in 2019, the OPW has further enhanced its governance arrangements. At the project completion stage, the Sponsoring Agency (either OPW or Local Authority) is required to produce a Project Completion Report (previously known as Post Project Reviews). Project completion reports shall identify whether the projects were delivered in line with the intended scope and budget and in line with the Public Spending Code. The OPW has drafted a guidance note and newly developed templates to support project completion reporting. These templates will be piloted by the OPW in 2023.

In 2021, Flood Risk Management completed an internal review of its project delivery processes and procedures. The review resulted in 33 recommendations, most of which have since been implemented thus further enhancing the roles and responsibilities of all project stakeholders, governance between the local authorities, and OPW processes and procedures to ensure the requirements of the Public Spending Code are fully met.

A further review of the effectiveness of the OPW's Minor Works and Coastal Protection Scheme is currently being conducted. The most recent review of this scheme was carried out in 2017. The scheme provides Local Authorities with 90% funding to address localised flooding issues up to €750,000, thereby providing local communities with a sustainable and meaningful avenue to alleviate flood risk from at risk homes and businesses.

OPW's Flood Risk Management has also been subject to internal and external audits on expenditure, governance, and procurement. Implementing the recommendations from these audits helps to further enhance and continually improve the efficiencies and value for money from investment of flood risk management.

Arterial Drainage Maintenance

Under OPW's statutory maintenance of Arterial Drainage, this is an area that is being continuously improved. It is recorded through the OPW's Integrated Management System for the service, which is accredited with NSAI for both Quality and Health and Safety (ISO 9001 and ISO 45001 respectively). Part of its accreditation includes an annual Audit by the NSAI, and the recommendations from those audits are fully implemented.

The OPW has invested in maintaining a modern fleet of plant and has increased staff numbers assigned to Arterial Drainage Maintenance. These maintenance works are carried out in accordance with relevant legislation, through a range of ongoing environmental assessments, including Strategic Environmental Assessments, Appropriate Assessments and Ecological Assessments, supported by widespread stakeholder consultation. Thus, the way that these works are undertaken is continuously evolving to ensure that they meet best environmental practice.

Estate Management

- The following sets out the process for scheduling and planning reviews.

Public Spending Code

Capital programmes and projects follow the PSC lifecycle stages and the CWMF involving conducting the analysis and reviews relevant to the various stages to ensure compliance throughout. Selecting lease hold properties is completed in line with OPW processes and the principals of the Public Spending Code.

Also appropriate governance and oversight frameworks relative to project/programme value and risk are set up.

Internal Audit

An annual risk based internal audit plan is agreed with the Audit Committee and Management Board. The 2023 Audit Plan, which was approved by the Management Board, was prepared in accordance with Standard 2010 of the Internal Audit Standards, which requires the Head of Internal Audit to establish a risk-based plan to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation's goals.

In respect of Internal Audit recommendations, the Internal Auditing Standards require Heads of Internal Audit to "establish and maintain a system to monitor the disposition of results communicated to management" and to "establish a follow-up process to monitor and ensure that management actions have been effectively implemented or that senior management has accepted the risk of not taking action" (IIA Standard 2500.A.1). The Departments Internal Audit Unit therefore conducts a review of each audit report six months after it has been submitted to the Audit Committee with a view to ascertaining

the degree to which line managers are meeting their commitments to implement audit recommendations. In addition, Internal Audit maintains a tracker of all audit recommendations that remain open post the six-month review, which is updated and reported to the Audit Committee on a bi-annual basis.

IGEES Spending Reviews

Programmes / policy reviewed on a rolling basis. The scope is being broadened to encompass policy analysis and evaluation in support of the service-wide agenda of evidence-informed policy making in addition to the focus on expenditure re-prioritisation in the context of the Budget. This approach, which will support a broader range of Spending Review topics, will further align the process with the IGEES Medium Term Strategy and the current Public Service Reform Programme, Our Public Service 2020.

- Robust processes and structures are in place to ensure appropriate governance is applied to the implementation of recommendations and findings arising from reviews undertaken.
 - Regarding the effect of the implementation of recommendations and findings on the allocation of funding, it must be noted that all of the structures of funding and process evaluation listed above are relevant in the context of allocation of resources, alongside the Annual Estimates process and the appraisal of demand for services, objectives of meeting citizen's needs, urgency and capacity. The Office works closely and is actively engaged with colleagues in the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform on an ongoing basis and throughout the Annual Estimates Process.
 - Property Management have an agreed set of processes in relation to the acquisition of property which ensures a range of options are considered in each scenario.
- 7. In accordance with section 19 of the Comptroller and Auditor General Act 1993, any other evidence you might wish to provide as to:**
- (b) the economy and efficiency of the Department in the use of its resources,**
 - (c) the systems, procedures and practices employed by the Department for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of its operations".**
- The office strives for best practice in achieving economy and efficiency in the use of resources. Across the public service there are well established systems, procedures and practices employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Department's/Office's operations.
 - The Public Service Performance Reports give an overview on what is being delivered with public funds. They provide a clear and accessible picture of how public funds have been allocated, how those funds have been used and the impact of this

spending on our society. The 2021 Report is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/61d3f-public-service-performance-reports/>

- The office also publishes its annual report and this report reflects key achievements against key goals.
- The OPW operates a rolling Workforce Plan. The Workforce Planning process assists in making critical decisions related to the organisation's workforce over the short to medium term, ensuring it has the capability and capacity required to deliver on its strategic goals and objectives in the coming years. It also assists in creating awareness of staffing requirements in the short to medium term so that shortfalls can be addressed, threats to business mitigated and service delivery maintained in a seamless fashion.
- Staffing requests are considered by reference to the broad focus of the OPW's Workforce Plan and available funding, to make sure the organisation has the right number of people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time to facilitate the delivery of the strategic business goals and Programme for Government commitments mandated to the OPW by Government

8. Any other information that you, in your capacity as Accounting Officer, might wish to add to assist the Committee in forming a view as to whether you can demonstrate VFM in the context of Standing Order 218(2)

- One other item to note is the ongoing engagement with DPENDPDR regarding the establishment of sectoral guidance on the acquisition of property through the commercial office market.

The objective of this guidance is to establish a framework within which OPW, DPENDPDR and the Client Departments can work together to achieve agreed outcomes by setting out a series of incremental steps in full compliance with the Public Spending Code.

- The OPW has endeavoured to provide information in response to this request to facilitate the implementation of Standing Order 218(2) and in doing so enable the Committee to assess the extent to which an Accounting Officer can demonstrate whether VFM is being achieved in relation to the expenditure in the accounts under their responsibility.
- Should any additional information be required, every effort will be made to respond accordingly and in a timely manner.

Dáil Standing Order 218(2)

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Template

Instructions

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VFM Information

| | | | |
|---|---|---|-----------------|
| Title of ex-post review of expenditure | Office of Public Works (OPW) Flood Risk Management Arterial Drainage Maintenance and Construction Channel Maintenance Benchmarking Exercise | Type of review: | Internal Review |
| Accounting period(s) to which it relates: | | Authored by: | OPW |
| Related review(s) previously undertaken: | | Started: | |
| Quantum of expenditure covered by review: | | Completed: | July 2014 |
| % of total voted expenditure covered by review: | | Expenditure type: | |
| Programme line(s): | | Relevant subhead(s): | A.6 |
| % of total programme expenditure: | | If the review is reflected in a Public Service Performance Report, please provide year and page number: | |

VFM details

Objectives:

Arterial drainage maintenance is a statutory requirement for the OPW to maintain some 12,000 kms of river channel and 800km of embankments, under the Arterial Drainage Act 1945, as amended

The purpose of the exercise was to determine if the service could be provided by external contractors at more favourable cost.

The benchmarking exercise was carried out to examine the feasibility of providing elements of this service by external service provider. The aims of the exercise were:

- to examine and measure the costs of an external delivery service
- to identify areas for improvement in the direct provision service
- to identify any impediments to the external delivery service



Findings

The benchmarking exercise has clearly shown that the cost of delivering channel maintenance is significantly lower using the existing direct labour model. Cost per metre run using the direct labour model for 2013 was €4.14 per metre as against a cost of €4.83 for the lowest tenderer (Tenderer 2) and a cost for the average of the tenders received of €7.18 per metre. It is notable that no claims were lodged during the course of the contract other than the agreed addition 1050m of channel at the tendered rate per metre. This is unlikely to pertain, given current experiences on flood relief construction projects, in a scaling up of such a contract in the future.

The review also highlighted that it is incumbent on the Regional Engineer and Engineering staff to manage the resources of staff and machines safely and effectively within the constraints of the environmental windows in order to optimise output on arterial drainage maintenance both channel maintenance and embankment and structures inspection, repair and replacement works.

This will be achieved on channel maintenance using the direct labour method by;

- Increasing output
- Minimising and eliminating where possible the use of the one person excavator operations
- Reducing other works that would impede channel maintenance progress on dedicated excavators
- Ever increasing environmental compliance and awareness
- Heightened safety awareness among all employees

Actions taken:

As per the main recommendation the direct labour model for channel maintenance has been retained. Improvements are continuously being made to how the service is delivered and this is recorded through the OPW's Integrated Management System for the service which is accredited with NSAI for both Quality and Health and Safety (ISO 9001 and ISO 45001). The OPW has invested in maintaining a modern fleet and has increased staff numbers assigned to Arterial Drainage Maintenance. How the work is undertaken is continuously evolving to ensure it meets best environmental practice.

Dáil Standing Order 218(2)

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Template

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VFM Information

| | | | |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Title of ex-post review of expenditure | An Assessment of the Balance of Current and Capital Expenditure: OPW Estate Management Portfolio | Type of review: | Spending Review |
| Accounting period(s) to which it relates: | 2021 | Authored by: | OPW with input from IGEES |
| Related review(s) previously undertaken: | Not applicable | Started: | 2019 |
| Quantum of expenditure covered by review: | Leased Expenditure €100m per annum Potential Capital Expenditure of over €0.5bn on new builds | Completed: | 2022 |
| % of total voted expenditure covered by review: | 24% | Expenditure type: | Current and Capital Non Pay |
| Programme line(s): | Estate Management | Relevant subhead(s): | B8 Rents, B6 New Works |
| % of total programme expenditure: | 26% | If the review is reflected in a Public Service Performance Report, please provide year and page number: | |

VFM details

Objectives:

The key objective of the paper is to:

- evaluate the relative long-term cost of the lease build or buy potential delivery options, across a number of case studies; and
- provide a sound evidence base to contribute to future decision-making on the selection of the most cost-effective and suitable office accommodation solutions.

Dáil Standing Order 218(2)

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Findings

Actions taken:

- Over a 40-year time horizon, the cost of building office accommodation in the five locations reviewed is between 29% and 38% lower than the cost of leasing accommodation in the same areas when the residual value of the buildings and sites are taken into account.
- The “breakeven points” at which the cost of leasing exceeds the new build and purchase options extend above 20 years in most cases. This demonstrates that leasing can be a cost effective solution for short to medium term requirements.
- IWMS introduced to deal with Gaps in accessibility of Data
- Review of office accommodation available for rent undertaken by the Property Advisory Service of the OPW to provide data for the case studies
- Outcome of review taken into account when decisions on potential property solutions, in response to client requests, are being made.

Dáil Standing Order 218(2)

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Template

Instructions

Please complete this template for each ex-post review of expenditure completed since 2015. Please include hyperlinks to the reviews where possible and otherwise provide the reviews in soft copy.

VFM Information

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Title of ex-post review of expenditure | Delivery of Flood Relief Schemes by different procurement/contract methods - Report on Value for Money | Type of review: | Undertaken by External consultant: Report on Value for Money |
| Accounting period(s) to which it relates: | | Authored by: | ARUP |
| Related review(s) previously undertaken: | | Started: | |
| Quantum of expenditure covered by review: | | Completed: | February 2013 |
| % of total voted expenditure covered by review: | | Expenditure type: | Capital |
| Programme line(s): | | Relevant subhead(s): | A.5 |
| % of total programme expenditure: | | If the review is reflected in a Public Service Performance Report, please provide year and page number: | |

VFM details

Objectives:

The key objective of the study was to assess the value for money as a comparison of both the Directly Managed Schemes and the public procurement of third party private sector construction firms delivery methods by comparing three schemes which had been substantially completed, namely; Dodder Phase 1, Ennis Upper and Mornington

Findings

FINDINGS –

ARUP considered the following to be the value drivers of OPW directly managed schemes:

- Greater flexibility to react sensibly and cost efficiently to issues which might arise during construction such as unforeseen ground conditions and utilities, landowner issues and requirements for alternative reinstatement etc., thus avoiding delays and additional costs.

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- Lower consultancy fees (Less detailed design, no contract docs, tender assessment or contract admin).
- No Resident Engineering staff required.
- No bond required.
- Self-insured – but the value of the retained risk needs to be considered.
- No conciliation costs.
- Potentially lower administration costs.
- Lower likelihood or quantum of compensation claims as OPW directly managed staff and supervisory staff are likely to deal more sympathetically with affected landowners as they understand and can help minimise potential claims

ARUP considered that the following may be disadvantages of OPW directly managed schemes:

- Reasonably small crews and thus lower output and scheme takes longer to deliver, which has the knock on effect of increasing costs in terms of overheads and supervision.
- OPW may not have the purchasing power that large Contractors may have in terms of bulk discount on materials and competitive subcontractor rates and in some cases may be hampered by public procurement rules. (Embankment cost on Mornington is a good example).
- OPW's crew may not have the specialist skills or plant required for some schemes, e.g. secant piling, ground anchors, etc.

Actions taken:

ACTIONS:

The OPW has developed its capacity to deliver schemes via the directly managed model. At present there are 7 Flood Relief Schemes at construction stage, 6 of these are via direct managed model by the OPW.