

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 13 JULY 2023

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09:31 a.m., a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

Deputies: Brian Stanley (Cathaoirleach), John Brady, Colm Burke, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Alan Kelly, Paul McAuliffe, Imelda Munster, Catherine Murphy, Verona Murphy, Marc Ó Cathasaigh and James O'Connor.

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

RTÉ

- Ms Siún Ní Raghallaigh, Chairperson
- Mr. Kevin Bakhurst, Director General
- Mr. Adrian Lynch, Deputy Director General
- Ms Paula Mullooly, Director of Legal Affairs
- Mr. Richard Collins, Director of Finance
- Mr. Declan McBennett, Group Head of Sport
- Mr. Conor Mullen, Commercial Director, Sales and Strategy
- Mr. Robert Shortt, Staff Representative
- Mr. Noel Curran, Former Director General

Matters for discussion:

Commercial arrangements entered into by RTÉ and its presenters, including those underwritten by RTÉ, which have impacted on and relate to the expenditure of public monies.

The Committee suspended at 11:38.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:53.

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 13:59.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 15:01.

2. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were eleven sets of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 3 July and 7 July 2023.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	Health Service Executive (click here to view accounts)	2022 €23.4 billion current + €1.2 billion capital	9 Jun 2023	4 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion The audit report draws attention to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> charges totalling €94.4 million related to obsolescence of Covid-19 vaccines stocks; and €1.7 million spent on storage of obsolete protective suits and hand gel a continuing material level of non-compliance with procurement rules — estimated at 7% by HSE, but using a methodology that HSE accepts has limitations an increasing trend of transfers to Section 38 and 39 bodies not being covered by a relevant form of funding agreement very high remuneration payments to certain employees, with the highest earner receiving almost €1 million in 2022; and some weaknesses in controls over payments to high earners. <p style="text-align: right;">(click here for further information)</p>
2	Carbon Fund financial statements (click here to view accounts)	2022 €nil	15 May 2023	4 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion
3	Defence Forces Canteen Board (click here to view accounts)	2022 €1 million	6 Jun 2023	5 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion
4	National Debt of Ireland (click here to view accounts) <i>National debt at year end: €231 billion</i>	2022 €3.8 billion (debt service)	15 May 2023	6 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion
5	National Treasury Management Agency	2022 €136 million	15 May 2023	6 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
	Administration Account (click here to view accounts)				
6	Post Office Savings Bank Fund (click here to view accounts) <i>Deposits at year end: €4.7 billion</i>	2022 €147 million	15 May 2023	6 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion
7	State Claims Agency (click here to view accounts) <i>Estimated contingent liability at year end: €5 billion</i>	2022 €567 million	15 May 2023	6 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion
8	Dormant Accounts Fund (click here to view accounts) <i>Balance at year end: €97 million</i>	2022 €55 million	15 May 2023	6 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion
9	National Surplus (Exceptional Contingencies) Reserve Fund (click here to view accounts) <i>Net assets at year end: €2 billion</i>	2022 €6 million	15 May 2023	6 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion
10	Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (click here to view accounts) <i>Net assets at year end: €15.01 billion</i>	2022 €2 billion	15 May 2023	6 Jul 2023	Clear audit opinion
11	Ireland Apple Escrow Fund (click here to view accounts) <i>Net assets at year end: €13.4 billion</i>	2022 €259 million loss	15 May 2023	6 Jul 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.

It was agreed to request the HSE for a note to include the following: breakdown of remuneration of people over €500k, the positions held by these individuals and whether there is an element of arrears involved in these payments.

3. Correspondence

Correspondence received		
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements		Decision
R2040 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Caroline O’Keeffe, Personal Assistant to the Director General, RTÉ, dated 12 July 2023.	Note and publish.
R2041 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Siún Ní Raghallíagh, Chairperson, RTÉ, dated 12/07/2023.	Note and publish.
R2041 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Adrian Lynch, Deputy Director General, RTÉ, dated 12/07/2023.	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1990 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Tom Grady, Chief Executive, Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board, dated 30/06/2023	Note and publish.
R1999 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 03/07/2023	Note and publish.
R2005 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, dated 04/07/2023	Note and publish.
R2009 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Kevin O'Brien, Government Accounting Unit, Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, dated 30/06/2023	Note and publish.
R2011 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Orla Feely, President, University College Dublin, dated 05/07/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R2025 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Katherine Licken, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 07/07/2023	Note and publish. Agreed to request the following information from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media: - a schedule of meetings, the minutes and information on the resources and budget for hosting the Ryder Cup in 2027; - what role does Golf Ireland play, if any; - whether there is a proposal to upgrade Shannon Airport; and - whether other events are tied to and being funded as a result of the Ryder Cup being held in Ireland.
R2035 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Vivienne Flood, Head of Public Affairs, RTÉ, dated 11/07/2023	Agreed to note and publish the updated versions of the RTÉ correspondence.
R2036 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Caroline O'Keeffe, Personal Assistant to the Director General, RTÉ, dated 11/07/2023	See R2035 PAC33.
R2037 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Caroline O'Keeffe, Personal Assistant to the Director General, RTÉ, dated 12/07/2023	See R2035 PAC33.
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1931 PAC33	Correspondence received from Verona Murphy, T.D., Houses of the Oireachtas, dated 12/06/2023	Note.
R1993 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 30/06/2023	Note.
R1994 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 30/06/2023	Note.
R1995 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 30/06/2023	Note.
R1996 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 30/06/2023	Note.
R2000 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 03/07/2023	Note.
R2002 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 04/07/2023	Note.
R2003 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 04/07/2023	It was agreed to request the consent of the correspondent to forward the correspondence to Screen Ireland and to the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media for a response to the matters raised.

Correspondence received		
R2010 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 06/07/2023	Note.
R2013 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 05/07/2023	Note.
R2015 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 29/06/2023	Note.
R2016 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 06/07/2023	Note.
R2017 PAC33	Correspondence received from Niamh Smyth T.D., Cathaoirleach, Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media, dated 06/07/2023	Note.
R2026 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 10/07/2023	Note.
R2031 PAC33	Correspondence received from Laura Pathe, Clerk to the Committee, Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media, dated 11/07/2023	Note.
R2032 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 10/07/2023	Note.
R2033 PAC33	Correspondence received from Niamh Smith, Cathaoirleach, Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media, dated 11/07/2023	Note.
R2034 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 12/07/2023	Note.
R2038 PAC33	Correspondence received from Elaine Muldoon, Clerk, Committee on Remit Oversight, dated 12/07/2023	Note.

4. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme as proposed:

Thursday 21 September 2023: Correspondence and business of the Committee

Thursday 28 September 2023: NAMA

Thursday 5 October 2023: HSE

Thursday 12 October 2023: RTÉ

Thursday 19 October 2023: National Paediatric Hospital Development Board and Children's Health Ireland

It was agreed to add City of Dublin Education and Training Board and the Office of Public Works to the work programme.

5. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **private** session at 15:41.

Sensitive - for consideration in Private session		Decision
R1997 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 30/06/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1998 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 02/07/2023	Note.
R2001 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 29/06/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R2004 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 04/07/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R2012 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 05/07/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

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It was agreed to add a meeting with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to the work programme. Particular areas of interest include: Uisce Éireann, water infrastructure planning and water connections.

The Committee **adjourned** at 16:09 until Thursday 21 September 2023.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
21 September 2023