

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2023

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09:36 a.m. a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

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

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform

- Mr. David Feeney, Principal Officer
- Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General
- Mr. John Pender, Principal Officer, Work and Pensions Division
- Mr. Kevin Meany, Principal Officer, National Investment Office
- Ms. Niamh Callaghan, Principal Officer, Expenditure Policy Division

Matters for discussion:

- **Appropriation Accounts 2022**
 - Vote 11 – Office of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform
 - Vote 12 – Superannuation and Retired Allowances
 - Vote 39 – Office of Government Procurement
 - Vote 43 – Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
- **Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2022:**
 - Chapter 5 – Vote accounting and budget management

The following areas of interest were flagged by Members.

- Format and Content of Appropriation Accounts
- The delivery of the national development plan
- Public spending code

The Committee suspended at 11:08.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:18.

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 12:35.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13:31.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9 and 14 November 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were 4 sets of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 6 November and 10 November 2023.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	Donegal Education and Training Board (click here to view accounts)	2022 €101 million	13 Sep 2023	7 Nov 2023	Clear audit opinion
2	National Training Fund (click here to view accounts)	2022 €951 million	25 Sep 2023	7 Nov 2023	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to a chapter in the <i>Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2022</i> , which examines the utilisation of funding allocated to the National Training Fund, and the accumulation of surpluses in the Fund (click here to view the chapter)
3	Irish Fiscal Advisory Council (click here to view accounts)	2022 €904,000	19 Sep 2023	9 Nov 2023	Clear audit opinion
4	Law reform Commission (click here to view accounts)	2022 €2.6 million	26 Sep 2023	9 Nov 2023	Clear audit opinion

It was agreed to note the listings of the accounts and statements.

The Committee has a standing agreement to request explanations for any significant non-compliant procurement or delays in laying accounts before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

4. Correspondence

Correspondence received		
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements		Decision
R2225 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, dated 10/11/2023	Note and publish.
R2230 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, dated 15/11/2023	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R2212 PAC33	Correspondence received from Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media, dated, 06/11/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed to request a copy of the review of the Large-Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) once finalised. • It was agreed to request the number of pools which are supported by the local authorities and to bring to the Departments attention that the committee is suggesting that the population has to be a central criterion.

Correspondence received		
R2214 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director, HSE, dated 07/11/2023	<p>Note and publish except for attachments (iii), (iv) and (v). It was agreed to request the following from the Department of Health in relation to residential and respite care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the Department of Health has done any work on what a multi-annual investment programme would look like and cost. <p>It was agreed to request the following from the HSE in relation to residential and respite care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the HSE has done any work on what a multi-annual investment programme would look like and cost? <p>It was agreed to request the following from the HSE in relation to the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed to request further information in relation to information provided regarding number of dentists per head of population in each CHO. • It was agreed to request clarification from the HSE regarding the ages of the children being treated under the DTSS where the school year being completed is 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. • The number of DTSS dentists' contracts there are under county Laois and in each of the 6 counties covered under CHO8. • The budget for the current year for CHO8 with a breakdown per county and the number of dentists willing to take on patients in counties Laois and Offaly.
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R2216 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual dated 07/11/2023	Note and publish. It was agreed to inform the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R2223 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 09/11/2023	Note
R2222 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 08/11/2023	Note
R2229 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 14/11/2023.	Note

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme.

It was agreed to add the National Training Fund (NTF) accounts to the meeting of 23 November 2023. It was also agreed to schedule a meeting with the Department of Social Protection on 18 January 2024.

It was further agreed to schedule a meeting with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners on 25 January 2024.

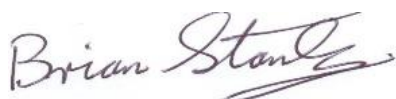
6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **private** session at 14:03.

Sensitive - for consideration in Private session		Decision
R2215 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 07/11/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the committee's decision.
R2221 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 06/11/2023	Note

The Committee **adjourned** at 14:13 until Thursday 23 November 2023.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
23 November 2023