

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2023

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09:30 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 and Marc Ó Cathasaigh.

Apologies:

Permanent

Witness: Ms Colette Drinan, Secretary and Director of Audit, Comptroller and Auditor General

1. Witnesses Examined:

RTÉ – Raidió Teilifís Éireann

- Mr Adrian Lynch, Audiences, Channels, Marketing/Acting Deputy DG
- Mr Conor Mullen, Head of Strategy & Commercial Compliance, RTÉ Media Sales
- Ms Eimear Cusack, Director of Human Resources
- Mr Kevin Bakhurst, Director General
- Mr Mike Fives, Group Financial Controller
- Ms Paula Mullooly, Director of Legal Affairs

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

- Ms Katherine Licken, Secretary General
- Ms Triona Quill, Assistant Secretary, Broadcasting and Media
- Mr Stephen Ryan, Principal Officer

Matters for discussion:

- Matters relating to the appropriation of public monies to RTÉ and the expenditure, by RTÉ, of such public monies, and
- 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 11:09.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:19.

It was agreed to note and publish the opening statement provided for the meeting.

It was agreed to request the Clerk to seek any follow-up information and carry out any agreed actions arising from the meeting.

The Committee suspended at 12:58.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 14:01.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5 October 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were 3 sets of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 2 October and 6 October 2023.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	The Heritage Council (click here to view accounts)	2022 €13.5 million	29 Jun 2023	3 Oct 2023	Clear audit opinion
2	An Bord Pleanála (click here to view accounts)	2022 €34.9 million	19 Jul 2023	4 Oct 2023	Clear audit opinion Attention is drawn to the following matters that are outlined by the Board in the statement on internal control. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A number of matters of serious concern that arose in 2022 about the Board's operations required reviews/reports. The statement outlines the status of the reviews of these matters at the signing date (17 July 2023). (click here for further information)• Penalty payments incurred by the Board in 2021(€10,000), 2022 (€1.34 million) and 2023 (€80,000) related to delays in decision making on strategic housing development applications. (click here for further information)
3	Ombudsman for Children's Office (click here to view accounts)	2022 €3.5 million	27 Sep 2023	4 Oct 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
R2157 PAC33	Correspondence from Kevin Bakhurst, Director General, RTÉ, dated 11/10/2023.	Note and publish.
R2158 PAC33	Correspondence from Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 11/10/2023.	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R2159 PAC33	Correspondence received from Denis Leamy, Chief Executive, Cork Education and Training Board, dated 12/06/2023	Note and publish.
R2162 PAC33	Correspondence received from Catherine Martin, Minister, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 03/10/2023	Note and publish.
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R2158 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 27/10/2023	It was agreed to write to the correspondent to reiterate that the matters raised are not within the remit of the Committee and that the Committee's consideration of the matter is closed.
R2167 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 06/10/2023	It was agreed to note the item.
R2168 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 06/10/2023	It was agreed to note the item.

5 Work Programme

The Committee's Work Programme was agreed.

6 Any Other Business

It was agreed to make an application to the Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight to exercise the power of compellability, in accordance with Standing Order 218(6).

The Committee **adjourned** at 14:18 until Thursday 19 October 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Stanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
19 October 2023