

An Coiste um Chuntais Phoiblí

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Committee of Public Accounts

Leinster House
Dublin 2 D02 XR20
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28 November 2023

Ref: S1504 PAC33

Ms Katherine Licken
Secretary General
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
23 Kildare street,
Dublin 2, D02 TD30

Dear Ms Licken,

I refer to the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on 16 November 2023.

The Committee considered correspondence from you, dated 6 November 2023, and a number of issues were raised which require a response from your Department.

It is suggested that before preparing your response to the matters raised by the Committee, you consult page 48 of the transcript, item 2212 which is available [here](#) for the specific details sought by the Committee.

It was agreed to request further information as follows:

1. That a copy of the review of the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) be provided to the Committee once finalised
2. The number of pools which are supported by each local authority and the population they serve
3. It was also agreed to emphasise the Committee's view that population be used as a central criterion in allocating funds under the LSSIF.

It is requested that any pdf attachments should be in a machine-readable format (i.e. in a native pdf version rather than a scanned version).

If any part of your response requires the inclusion of an external or independent report, please ensure that you have the consent of the report authors to allow for it to be published on the Oireachtas website.

The Committee requests that this information be forwarded within ten working days of the date of this letter. A response by email only is preferred. There is no requirement to also send a response in hard copy. Please use the reference number of this correspondence in your reply.

If you have any queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

C Smyth

Catherine Smyth
Committee Secretariat, Committee of Public Accounts
01 - 618 3016



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí
Office of the Secretary General

Ms Catherine Smyth,
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

08 January 2024

Ref: S1504 PAC33

Dear Ms Smyth

I refer to the meeting of the Public Accounts Committee on 16 November and your letter of 28 November 2023 which requested further information as follows:

- ***That a copy of the review of the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) be provided to the Committee once finalised;***

I am pleased to confirm that the LSSIF Review will be finalised early in the New Year and any issues identified will be addressed in the next LSSIF call for applications in 2024. The review will be provided to the Committee when completed.

- ***The number of pools which are supported by each local authority and the population they serve:***

The current landscape of swimming infrastructure and facilities in Ireland is dominated by what would be termed traditional style swimming pools with a diversity of management and operational arrangements, including local authorities, private operators and local community groups. The National Digital Database for Sport estimates there are over 400 pools in

operation while Ireland Active have previously estimated there are in the region of 425 swimming pools in operation in Ireland.

A Working Group chaired by this Department has been established and tasked with developing the National Swimming Strategy, which is based on a vision to ‘provide everyone in Ireland with an opportunity to swim’. The working group comprises representatives from relevant National Governing Bodies for sport and stakeholders, specifically Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland, Active Disability Ireland (formerly CARA), Ireland Active and the Local Authorities. Extensive stakeholder and public engagement has allowed for a wide range of viewpoints to be considered in shaping this Strategy. It is anticipated that recommendations arising from the National Swimming Strategy will include the need for an in-depth analysis of swimming pool provision within Ireland with particular reference to identifying gaps in provision and the environmental sustainability of facilities.

- ***It was also agreed to emphasise the Committee’s view that population be used as a central criterion in allocating funds under the LSSIF.***

The Committee’s view that population be used as a central criterion in allocating funds under LSSIF is noted and will be considered in the context of the current LSSIF review.

I am also pleased to confirm that on 6 December, Ministers Catherine Martin and Thomas Byrne announced that a new round of the Large-Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund will open for applications in the first half of 2024. As part of that announcement an additional grant allocation to existing LSSIF projects was also published. The first allocations under the LSSIF were announced in January 2020 with €86.4 million subsequently awarded to 33 different projects. This additional grant funding amounts to a total of €37.6 million with 27 individual projects benefitting, bringing the total awarded to date to Large Scale Sport Infrastructure funded projects to €124 million. The additional funding for projects is being provided, in response to delays experienced by grantees arising from the pandemic and construction inflation.

The Committee will wish to note that eight existing swimming related projects have now been allocated total grant funding under LSSIF of €19,950,592 as follows:

- Sligo: Waterpoint Aqua Park – €300,000.
- Kilkenny: The Watershed Development – €2,171,875.
- Limerick: Askeaton Pool and Leisure – €1,265,750
- Wicklow: Wicklow Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre – €1,796,600
- Louth: Dundalk Leisure Centre – €300,000
- Galway: Galway Regional Aquatic and Fitness Centre – €8,003,415
- Dublin: Samuel Beckett Civic Campus Phase 2 – €5,650,000
- Laois: Portarlinton Leisure Centre Swimming Pool – €462,952

I trust that this information will be helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Katherine Licken
Secretary General