

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 14 December 2023

The Committee met in **Public Session** at 09:32 a.m., a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

Deputies: Brian Stanley (Cathaoirleach), Colm Burke, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Paul McAuliffe, Catherine Murphy, Verona Murphy and Marc Ó Cathasaigh.

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

- Mr. Graham Doyle, Secretary General
- Ms. Áine Stapleton, Assistant Secretary, Social Housing Division
- Ms. Caroline Timmons, Assistant Secretary, Affordable Housing Division
- Mr. David Kelly, Assistant Secretary, Homelessness, Rental and Social Inclusion Division
- Mr. Feargal Ó Coigligh, Assistant Secretary, Housing Policy, and Standards Division
- Mr. Paul Hogan, Acting Assistant Secretary, Planning Division

The Housing Agency

- Mr. Bob Jordan, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms. Claire Feeney, Director of Services and Inclusion
- Mr. Jim Baneham, Director of Delivery and Innovation

Department of Public Expenditure NDP and Reform

- Ms. Jenny Connors, Principal Officer

Matters for discussion:

- **Appropriation Account 2022**
 - Vote 34 – Housing, Local Government and Heritage
 - Programme A – Housing
- **Financial Statements 2022**
 - The Housing Agency
- **Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2022:**
 - Chapter 11 – Utilisation of the Land Aggregation Scheme Sites

Specific Areas of Interest

- o The acquisition of homes by local authorities

The Committee suspended at 11:10.

The Committee resumed in **Public Session** at 11:20.

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 12:36

The Committee resumed in **Public Session** at 13:35.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7 December 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were 3 sets of financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 4 and 8 December 2023.

Ref	Body/fund	Accounting period/turnover	Date certified	Date presented	Audit opinion/notes
1	State Property (Miscellaneous Deposits) Account (click here to view accounts) <i>Balance at 31 Dec 2022: €2.7 million</i>	2022 €110,000	1 Dec 2023	4 Dec 2023	Clear audit opinion
2	Personal Injuries Assessment Board (click here to view accounts)	2022 €12.4 million	29 Sep 2023	7 Dec 2023	Clear audit opinion
3	National Disability Authority (click here to view accounts)	2022 €6.2 million	29 Sep 2023	8 Dec 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

R2270 PAC33 Correspondence received from Ms Ciara Galvin, The Housing Agency, dated 08/12/2023. Note and publish.

R2271 PAC33 Correspondence received from Ms Linda Hayden, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 08/12/2023. Note and publish.

R2277 PAC33 Correspondence received from Ms Sinead Kehoe, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, dated 13/12/2023. Note and publish.

R2278 PAC33 Correspondence received from Ms Ciara Galvin, The Housing Agency, dated 08/12/2023. Note and publish.

B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings

Decision

R2256 PAC33 Correspondence received from David Moloney, Secretary General DPENDPDR, dated 06/12/2023. Note and publish.

R2259 PAC33 Correspondence received from John McCarthy, Department of Finance, dated 01/12/2023. Note and publish.

R2269 PAC33 Correspondence received from Suzanne Eade, Chief Executive Officer, Horse Racing Ireland, dated 07/12/2023. Note and publish.

R2274 PAC33 Correspondence received from Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Heritage, and Local Government, dated 11/12/2023. Note and publish.

C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence

Decision

R2253 PAC33 Correspondence received from an individual, dated 01/12/2023. Note and publish.

Correspondence received

R2255 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 05/12/2023.	Write to the Department of Health to request a briefing setting out: - the Department's response to the decision of the Data Protection Commission in the Department of Health's processing of personal information in 29 litigation files; and - what steps, if any, the Department has taken to remedy the infringements identified by the Data Protection Commission. Inform the correspondent accordingly.
R2257 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual dated 22/11/2023.	Write to the correspondent to inform her that the Committee has recommended in its report on Horse Racing Ireland, that HRI includes a detailed breakdown in its annual report of the distribution of the total prize money pool each year, commencing from its 2022 Annual Report. This recommendation was accepted by HRI but the 2022 Annual Report has not yet been published.
R2260 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 04/12/2023.	Write to the correspondent to seek consent to forward this item to the Department of Education and Caranua for a substantive response.
R2262 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual., dated 06/12/2023.	Note
R2263 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual., dated 06/12/2023.	Note
R2264 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 06/12/2023.	Note
R2265 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 06/12/2023.	Note
R2266 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual dated 05/12/2023.	Note
R2267 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 07/12/2023.	Note and publish.

Correspondence received

R2268 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 07/12/2023.	Note and not publish.
R2226 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 09/11/2023.	Note and provide a copy of R2269 B from HRI
R2274 PAC33	Correspondence received from Graham Doyle, Secretary General, Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government, dated 11/12/2023	Note and Publish
R2275 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual dated 11/12/2023.	Note and publish.
R2276 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual dated 11/12/2023.	Note and publish.

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed to:

- Schedule a meeting on 8 February 2024 with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Sport Ireland and the Football Association of Ireland.
- Schedule a meeting on 15 February 2024 with An Garda Síochána and An Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, to include representation from the Department of Justice.
- Schedule a meeting on 22 February 2024 with the Department of Justice.

It was agreed to add the following meetings to the work programme:

- o The Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine
- o Greyhound Racing Ireland
- o The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **private** session at 14:05.

Sensitive - for consideration in Private session

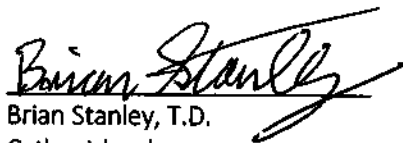
R2215 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 07/11/2023.	Decision Note and forward to the HSE to request a response and a briefing on any cost to the State arising with regard to patients treated in private hospitals during the period that the Safety Net Agreement was in place
R2258 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 29/11/2023.	It was agreed to inform the correspondent of the Committee's decision

R2261 PAC33

Correspondence received from an individual,
dated 05/12/2023.

Note and forward to the HSE to request a response and a briefing on any cost to the State arising with regard to patients treated in private hospitals during the period that the Safety Net Agreement was in place

The Committee **adjourned** at 14:23 until Thursday 18 January 2024.


Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
18 January 2024