



**Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála**

Office of the
Planning Regulator

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

CONTENTS

	Page
General Information	3
Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General	4-5
Governance Statement and Planning Regulator's Report	6-10
Statement on Internal Control	11-13
Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves	14
Statement of Financial Position	15
Statement of Cash Flows	16
Notes to the Financial Statements	17-24

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

GENERAL INFORMATION

Head Office	Office of the Planning Regulator, Fourth Floor (West Wing), Park House. Grangegorman, 191-193A North Circular Road, Dublin 7, D07 EWV4.
Senior Management Team	Niall Cussen - Chief Executive and Planning Regulator Anne Marie O'Connor – Deputy Planning Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations Gary Ryan - Director of Planning Reviews and Examinations Joanna McBride - Director of Research, Training and Corporate Services
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OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

CERTIFICATE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL



Ard Reachtaire Cuntas agus Ciste Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Office of the Planning Regulator

Opinion on the financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the Office of the Planning Regulator for the year ended 31 December 2020 as required under the provisions of section 31AG of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (inserted by section 4 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018). The financial statements comprise

- the statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves
- the statement of financial position
- the statement of cash flows and
- the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Office of the Planning Regulator at 31 December 2020 and of its income and expenditure for 2020 in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 — *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland*.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit of the financial statements in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the appendix to this report. I am independent of the Office of the Planning Regulator and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Report on information other than the financial statements, and on other matters

The Office of the Planning Regulator has presented certain other information together with the financial statements. This comprises the governance statement and Planning Regulator's report and the statement on internal control. My responsibilities to report in relation to such information, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the appendix to this report.

I have nothing to report in that regard.

Colette Drinan
For and on behalf of the
Comptroller and Auditor General

11 June 2021

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

CERTIFICATE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL

Appendix to the report

Responsibilities of the Office of the Planning Regulator and of the Planning Regulator

The governance statement and planning regulator's report sets out the respective responsibilities of the Office and of the Planning Regulator. The Office is responsible for

- the preparation of financial statements in the form prescribed under section 31AG of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (inserted by section 4 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018)

The Planning Regulator is responsible for

- ensuring that the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with FRS 102
- ensuring the regularity of transactions
- assessing whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate, and
- such internal control as he determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under section 31AG of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (inserted by section 4 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018) to audit the financial statements of the Office of the Planning Regulator and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- I evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures.

- I conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, on whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Office of the Planning Regulator's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Office of the Planning Regulator to cease to continue as a going concern.
- I evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Information other than the financial statements

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information presented with those statements, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, I am required under the ISAs to read the other information presented and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

Reporting on other matters

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation. I report if I identify material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit. I report if I identify any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

I also report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- the accounting records were not sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND PLANNING REGULATOR'S REPORT

Governance

The Office of the Planning Regulator ('OPR') was established in April 2019 on foot of recommendations made by the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments (the Mahon Tribunal) which was established by the Dáil in 1997. In performing its functions, OPR takes into account the objective of contributing to proper planning and sustainable development and the optimal functioning of planning under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ('the Act'). Section 31P of the Act gives the OPR a statutory basis to carry out three main functions:

- Independent assessment of all local authority and regional assembly forward planning, including development plans, local area plans, regional spatial and economic strategies;
- Examination of the systems and procedures used by any planning authority, including An Bord Pleanála, in the performance of any of their planning functions; and
- Driving national research, training, education and public information programmes.

The Planning Regulator is accountable to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and is responsible for ensuring good governance and performs this task by setting strategic objectives and targets and taking strategic decisions on all key business issues. The regular day-to-day management, control and direction of the OPR is the responsibility of the Planning Regulator and the senior management team.

OPR's Responsibilities

The OPR is responsible for assessment of all local authority and regional assembly forward planning, including zoning decisions. The OPR also ensures that planning authorities are operating with the highest standards of integrity and best practice, giving the public confidence that important planning decisions are taken in line with national policy. The OPR has the power to review the organisation, systems and procedures used by any planning authority or An Bord Pleanála.

The OPR also has the power to advise the Minister on whether a plan made by a local authority conflicts with national planning policy and to recommend that the Minister make directions where any plan is not in compliance with national policy. Additionally, the OPR drives national research, education and public information programmes to highlight the role and benefit of planning.

In preparing these Financial Statements, the OPR is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently,
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- prepare the Financial Statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that it will continue in operation, and
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the Financial Statements.

The OPR is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, its financial position and enables it to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with Section 31AG of the Act. The maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information on the OPR's website is the responsibility of the Planning Regulator.

The OPR is responsible for approving the annual plan and budget. An evaluation of the performance of the OPR by reference to the annual plan and budget was carried out. The OPR is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Planning Regulator considers that the Financial Statements of the OPR give a true and fair view of the financial performance and the financial position of the OPR at 31st December 2020.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND PLANNING REGULATOR'S REPORT

Section 31AL of the Act requires the OPR to adopt a Code of Conduct for dealing with conflicts of interest and promoting public confidence in the integrity of the conduct of its business. The Code of Conduct adopted by the OPR is available on its website. The provisions of the Code of Conduct also align with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Regulator's Structure

Mr. Niall Cussen was appointed on 3rd April 2019 by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, as Ireland's first Planning Regulator and heads up the OPR. Mr. Cussen's appointment was recommended by Government following an open recruitment process conducted by the Public Appointments Service.

The OPR is funded under subhead D.5. of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Vote 34.

The OPR has established a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The role of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FARC) is to support the Planning Regulator in relation to his responsibilities for issues of related controls, corporate governance and associated assurance. Members of the Committee were appointed, and the Committee was established in January 2020. The FARC met 5 times in 2020.

Members of the Committee are:-

External Members:

Pat Macken (Chairperson)

Lorraine O'Donoghue

Executive Members:

Joanna McBride, Director of Research, Training and Corporate Services

Gary Ryan, Director of Reviews and Examinations

Valerie Halpin – Secretary to the Committee

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND PLANNING REGULATOR'S REPORT

Schedule of Attendance, Fees and Expenses

No fee was paid to oversight committee members during the period of 2020. Expenses incurred and claimed by FARC members during the year included travel and subsistence amounting €108.42. The following is the schedule of meetings held by the FARC during 2020.

Attendance	Meeting dates					Expenses
	31-Jan-20	12-Mar-20	25-Jun-20	08-Oct-20	07-Dec-20	
Pat Macken	√	√	√	√	√	-
Lorraine O'Donoghue	√	√	√	√	√	€108.42
Joanna McBride	√	√	√	√	√	-
Gary Ryan	√	√	√	√	√	-

Key Personnel Changes

There were no Key Personnel Changes during 2020.

Disclosures Required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)

The Planning Regulator is responsible for ensuring that the OPR has complied with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies ("the Code"), as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in August 2016. The following disclosures are required by the Code:

Employee Short-Term Benefits

Range of total employee benefits		Number of Employees	
From	To	Year Ended 2020	9 Month Period 2019
€60,000	- €69,999	2	1
€70,000	- €79,999	1	-
€80,000	- €89,999	6	-
€90,000	- €99,999	-	1
€100,000	- €109,999	-	-
€110,000	- €119,999	-	-
€120,000	- €129,999	-	-
€130,000	- €139,999	1	-
€140,000	- €149,999	-	-
€150,000	- €159,999	-	-

*For the period from date of establishment 03 April 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Note: For the purposes of this disclosure, short-term employee benefits in relation to services rendered during the reporting period include salary, overtime allowances and other payments made on behalf of the employee but exclude employer's PRSI.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND PLANNING REGULATOR'S REPORT

Consultancy Costs

Consultancy costs include the cost of external advice to management and exclude outsourced 'business-as-usual' functions.

	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
Legal advice	55,185	35,686
Public relations/communications	6,328	13,526
Professional planning services	11,858	37,714
Other – health and safety services, procurement services	9,907	-
Total consultancy costs	83,278	86,926
Consultancy costs capitalised	-	-
Consultancy costs charged to the Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves	83,278	86,926
Total	83,278	86,926

Legal Costs and Settlements

The table below provides a breakdown of amounts recognised as expenditure in the reporting period in relation to legal costs, settlements and conciliation and arbitration proceedings relating to contracts with third parties. This does not include expenditure incurred in relation to general legal advice received by the OPR which is disclosed in Consultancy costs above.

	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
Legal fees - legal proceedings	-	-
Conciliation and arbitration payments	-	-
Settlements	-	-
Total	-	-

Travel and Subsistence Expenditure

Travel and subsistence expenditure are categorised as follows:

	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
Domestic		
- Committee Members	108	-
- Employees*	3,722	4,422
International		
- Committee Member	-	-
- Employees	-	435
Total	3,830	4,857

* In 2019, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage paid travel and subsistence on behalf of the OPR during the period amounting to €4,711.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND PLANNING REGULATOR'S REPORT

Hospitality Expenditure

During 2020, there was no hospitality expense incurred by the OPR.

Statement of Compliance

The OPR has complied with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in August 2016, with the following exceptions:

- Provisions in relation to role of the Board, role of the Chairperson and role of Board members: The stewardship structure of the OPR is atypical. There is no Board structure. The Planning Regulator undertakes the collective role of a Board. Therefore, in addition to performing his duties as a "Board", the Planning Regulator also performs executive functions.



Niall Cussen
Chief Executive and Planning Regulator

Date: 9th June 2021

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

Responsibility for System of Internal Control

As Chief Executive, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated by the OPR.

This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to me and my other obligations as Head of Office. Also, any system of internal control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Shared Services

The OPR was established with effect from 3rd April 2019. From then, the OPR did not have its own accounting system. An interim arrangement was in place whereby all income and expenditure was processed on its behalf by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This arrangement with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage terminated from 1st January 2020 at which point the OPR had its own accounting system and processes all of its own income and expenditure apart from the payroll. The payroll function remains with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage who continued to process the payroll on the OPR's behalf.

Financial Control Environment

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place.

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee has been established to advise me in discharging my responsibilities for the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the Control Environment

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, and the resulting public health advice and safety measures, rapidly and fundamentally changed the working practices of the OPR with remote and virtual working becoming the norm for most OPR staff.

OPR has monitored the developments closely, looking to mitigate the risks that may affect the OPR's business operations, staff and stakeholders. Actions taken by the Office include: -

- Initiation of OPR's Business as Usual (BAU) model and transition the Office's business operations to a remote working environment where most business processes can continue as normal.
- Continuous assessment of significant risks pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic and the agility of OPR to respond effectively.
- Ensuring robust segregation of duties and adequate cover remain in place, should specific approving authorities be unavailable.
- Ensuring all existing data protection and records management policies and procedures continue to apply in the remote working environment and are monitored and reported on as normal.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

- Ensuring that staff members access the OPR's network using OPR's approved ICT equipment and that all staff members working remotely have been equipped with the necessary ICT equipment.
- Assessment of potential for weaknesses in internal controls resulting from Covid-19 and taking measures to monitor and update internal controls where necessary.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place, including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. This includes the following elements:

- There is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management.
- There are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts.
- A risk management system operates within the OPR.
- There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems.
- There are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines.
- The OPR ensures that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines.

Internal Audit and Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

On 1st January 2020 the OPR fully established a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The OPR has instituted an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter that is approved by me and my Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which the OPR is exposed and its annual internal audit plans, which are approved by me and my Finance, Audit and Risk Audit Committee, are based on this analysis. These plans will aim to cover the key controls on a rolling basis over a reasonable period.

Risk and Control Framework

The OPR has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, to mitigate those risks.

A risk register is in place which identifies the key risks facing the OPR and these have been identified, evaluated and graded according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Executive Management Team (EMT). The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level.

The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific staff.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Formal procedures have been established for monitoring control processes and control deficiencies are communicated to those responsible for taking corrective action and to management and the EMT, where relevant, in a timely way. I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

Procurement

The OPR has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines as set out by the Office of Government Procurement.

Review of Effectiveness

I confirm that the OPR has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures. The OPR's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal and external auditors, the FARC, which oversees their work, and the senior management within the OPR responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

I confirm that OPR conducted an annual review of the effectiveness of the internal controls for 2020. The Statement on Internal Control has been reviewed by the FARC to ensure it accurately reflects the control system in operation during the reporting period.

The OPR is reasonably assured that the system of Internal Control instituted and implemented for the financial year ended 31st December 2020 is effective.

Internal Financial Control Issues

No weaknesses in internal financial control were identified in relation to 2020 that require disclosure in the financial statements.



Niall Cussen
Chief Executive and Planning Regulator

Date: 9th June 2021

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND RETAINED REVENUE RESERVES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Notes	Year ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
Income			
Oireachtas Grants	2	2,430,876	1,356,437
Total Income		<u>2,430,876</u>	<u>1,356,437</u>
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	3	1,393,633	660,558
Upkeep and Overheads	4	397,737	176,978
General Expenses	5	298,777	111,795
Service Expenses	6	177,546	122,009
Depreciation	7	14,175	2,812
Total Expenditure		<u>2,281,868</u>	<u>1,074,152</u>
Surplus for the period before appropriations		149,008	282,285
Transferred (to) Capital Account		(163,892)	(45,360)
(Deficit) / Surplus for the period after appropriations		(14,884)	236,925
Balance brought forward at 1 January		236,925	-
Balance brought forward at 31 December		<u>222,041</u>	<u>236,925</u>

All income and expenditure for the period relates to continuing activities at the reporting date.

The Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves includes all gains and losses recognised in the period.

The Statement of Cash Flows and Notes 1 to 15 form part of these Financial Statements.



Niall Cussen
Chief Executive and Planning Regulator

Date: 9th June 2021

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Notes	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
<u>Non-Current Assets</u>			
Property, plant and equipment	7	209,252	45,360
<u>Current Assets</u>			
Receivables	8	14,701	294,687
Cash and cash equivalents		274,638	-
Total Current Assets		289,339	294,687
<u>Current Liabilities (Amount falling due within one year)</u>			
Payables	9	67,298	57,762
Net Current Assets		222,041	236,925
Net Assets		431,293	282,285
<u>Representing</u>			
Retained Revenue Reserves		222,041	236,925
Capital Account	10	209,252	45,360
		431,293	282,285

The Statement of Cash Flows and Notes 1 to 15 form part of these Financial Statements.



Niall Cussen
Chief Executive and Planning Regulator

Date: 9th June 2021

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Notes	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
(Deficit) / Surplus for the period		(14,884)	236,925
Transfer to Capital Account		163,892	45,360
Depreciation charge		14,175	2,812
Decrease / (Increase) in Receivables		279,986	(294,687)
Increase in Payables		9,536	57,762
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities		452,705	48,172
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Payments to acquire property, plant and equipment	7	(178,067)	(48,172)
Net Cashflows from Investing Activities		(178,067)	(48,172)
Increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		274,638	-
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of period		-	-
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		274,638	-

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

1. Accounting policies

The basis of accounting and significant accounting policies adopted by the OPR are set out below. They have been applied consistently throughout the period.

a) General Information

The OPR was set up under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, with a head office at Fourth Floor (West Wing), Park House, Grangegorman, 191-193A, North Circular Road, Dublin 7. The primary function of the OPR is the independent assessment and evaluation of all local authority and regional assembly forward planning, including zoning decisions.

b) Statement of Compliance

The Financial Statements of the OPR for the period ended 31st December 2020 have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland.

c) Basis of Preparation

The Financial Statements are prepared on the going concern basis, under the historical cost convention and comply with the financial reporting standards of the Financial Reporting Council, except as indicated in Oireachtas Grants below. The Financial Statements are in the form approved by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage with the concurrence of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The Financial Statements are prepared in Euro which is the functional currency of the OPR.

The Financial Statements prepared are for the year ended 31st December 2020. The comparative period is the 9 month period from the date of establishment 3rd April 2019 to 31st December 2019.

d) Oireachtas Grants

Income recognised in the Financial Statements under Grants represents funding provided to the OPR through the Vote of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The Department administers the payment of salaries and the amount recognised as income represents the recourse to the Vote to fund payments made during the period.

e) Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, plant and equipment are stated at their historical cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is charged to the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves on a straight-line basis, at the rates set out below, so as to write off the assets, adjusted for residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows: -

Furniture and Fittings	10%
Office Equipment	20%
IT Equipment	20%
IT Software	20%

The residual value and useful lives of fixed assets are considered annually for indicators that these may have changed. Where such indicators are present, a review will be carried out of the residual value, depreciation method and useful lives, and these will be amended if necessary. Changes in depreciation rates arising from this review are accounted for prospectively over the remaining useful lives of the assets.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

f) Capital Account

The Capital Account represents the unamortised value of funding applied for the purchase of fixed assets.

g) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash consists of cash on hand and demand deposits.

h) Foreign Currencies

Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are translated into euro and recorded at the rate of exchange ruling at the dates of transactions. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into euro at the rates of exchange ruling at the reporting date or at forward purchase contract rates where such contracts exist.

i) Retirement Benefits

The Employees of the OPR's pension entitlements are covered by:

- i. A defined benefit scheme which is unfunded and is administered by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, or
- ii. The Single Public Service Pension Scheme which commenced with effect from 1st January 2013. All new members of staff joining the organisation on or after that date are members of this scheme.

Under the Act all officers of the OPR are Civil Servants, accordingly no charge arises in these Financial Statements for any liabilities which may arise in respect of their retirement benefits.

j) Operating Leases

Rental expenditure under operating leases is recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves over the life of the lease. Expenditure is recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease period.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
2. Oireachtas Grants		
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	2,430,876	1,356,437
	2,430,876	1,356,437

The OPR is funded from the Vote of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, through subhead D.5.
The Oireachtas grant figure comprises the amount charged to Subhead D.5 in 2020 of €2,481,055 less a 2019 cost refund of €50,179.

	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
3. Staff Costs and Employee Information		
Wages and Salaries	1,260,985	490,754
PRSI	121,656	42,591
Secondments	3,683	80,231
Recruitment costs	7,009	45,207
Interview Panel Member Cost	300	1,775
Total Staff Cost	1,393,633	660,558

Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC) was deducted in line with statutory requirements. €48,595 (2019: €23,105) of ASC has been deducted in 2020 and retained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

a) Employee Numbers

The number of staff at year end (full time equivalents) was 21 (2019: 15).

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

b) Staff Costs and Employee Information

Employee benefits breakdown is disclosed under “Employee Short-Term Benefits” in the Governance Statement and Planning Regulator’s Report.

c) Termination Benefits

No termination benefits were paid during the period.

d) Remuneration of Chief Executive Officer

The remuneration in 2020 of the Chief Executive Officer, who was appointed on 3 April 2019, is as follows:

	Year Ended	9 Month
	2020	Period
	€	2019
	€	€
Mr. Niall Cussen, CEO	<u>137,225</u>	<u>96,383</u>

The CEO did not receive any performance related payments or any other benefit in kind during the period.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

	Year Ended 2020	9 Month Period 2019
	€	€
4. Upkeep and Overheads		
Rent and Service Charges	350,373	160,492
Telephone	471	1,454
Repairs and Maintenance	6,963	74
Acquisition Services	14,549	9,643
Insurance on Premises	25,381	5,315
	397,737	176,978

	Year Ended 2020	9 Month Period 2019
	€	€
5. General Expenses		
Travel and Subsistence *	3,722	146
IT Expenses	55,776	32,585
Printing, Post and Stationery	15,913	2,415
Conference and Seminar Costs	-	8,587
Communication	31,126	43,515
Staff Training	2,459	16,030
Sponsorship of programmes and research	162,400	-
Other Office Expenses	27,381	8,517
	298,777	111,795

* In addition to the 2019 figure above, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has paid travel and subsistence on behalf of the OPR during the period amounting to €4,711.

	Year Ended 2020	9 Month Period 2019
	€	€
6. Service Expenses		
Legal	55,185	35,686
Services Contracts	31,353	58,710
Accounting	67,711	16,113
Internal Audit	11,797	-
External Audit	11,500	11,500
	177,546	122,009

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

7. Property, Plant and Equipment

	<i>Furniture & Fittings</i>	<i>Office Equipment</i>	<i>IT Equipment</i>	<i>Software/ Licenses</i>	<i>Total</i>
	€				
<u>Cost</u>					
At 01 January 2020	11,669	6,597	1,968	27,938	48,172
Additions for the period	98,649	37,452	25,791	16,175	178,067
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2020	110,318	44,049	27,759	44,113	226,239
<u>Accumulated Depreciation</u>					
At 01 January 2020	1,167	563	394	688	2,812
Depreciation charge for the period	3,632	2,985	1,651	5,907	14,175
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2020	4,799	3,548	2,045	6,595	16,987
<u>Net Book Value</u>					
At 31 December 2020	105,520	40,501	25,714	37,517	209,252
At 31 December 2019	10,502	6,034	1,574	27,250	45,360

8. Receivables

	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
Prepayments	14,701	290,779
Other Debtors	-	3,908
	14,701	294,687

All receivables are due within one year.

9. Payables

	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Creditors and accruals	65,126	57,762
Credit Card	785	-
Professional Services Withholding Tax	1,387	-
	67,298	57,762

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Year Ended 2020 €	9 Month Period 2019 €
10. Capital Account		
At 01 January 2020	45,360	-
<u>Transfer from / (to) Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves</u>		
Funding of Fixed Assets	178,067	48,172
Amount released on disposal of fixed assets	-	-
Amortisation in line with asset depreciation policy	(14,175)	(2,812)
Balance at 31 December	<u>209,252</u>	<u>45,360</u>

11. Lease Commitments

The OPR has commitments in respect of a lease on office accommodation at 4th Floor (West wing), Park House, 191-193A North Circular Road, Dublin 7. This is held by way of a lease which commenced in October 2020. The lease is for a period of 10 years. The initial annual cost of lease is €160,397 exclusive of VAT in respect of the premises.

Lease Commitments

At 31 December 2020, OPR had the following future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable leases:

	As at 31 Dec 2020 €
Payable within 1 year	133,664
Payable within 2 – 5 years	641,588
Payable after 5 years	761,886
	<u>1,537,138</u>

OFFICE OF THE PLAN PLANNING ING REGULATOR

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

12. Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments as at 31st December 2020.

13. Related Party Transactions/ Disclosure of Interests

The OPR complies with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to the disclosure of interests by the Planning Regulator and members/staff of the OPR. Formal procedures exist to ensure adherence with the requirements of the Code. There were no related party transactions reported in 2020.

Key Management in the OPR consist of the Chief Executive and Planning Regulator, Deputy Planning Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations, Director of Planning Reviews and Examinations and the Director of Research, Training and Corporate Services. Total Remuneration paid to key management personnel in 2020 was €395,932 (2019: 9 Months - €226,964).

14. Events After the Reporting Date

There were no events between the reporting date and the date of approval of these financial statements that require adjustment to the financial statements.

The Planning Regulator recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic is a significant event which has been continuing since early March 2020. The Planning Regulator has closely monitored the impact of Covid-19 on the OPR since early March 2020 and will continue to do so throughout the emergency period. The business continues to operate with measures in place to protect staff and the OPR's clients. To date, the operations are being maintained while adjusting to the different way in which the business is being delivered. The performance and operations of the OPR are being monitored closely and regular cash flow forecasts are provided to the Planning Regulator and to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

In evaluating these risks, the Planning Regulator has judged that the OPR's business, which is funded by the Exchequer through its parent the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, will continue into the future and therefore the Planning Regulator has approved these accounts on a going concern basis.

15. Approval of Financial Statements

The Financial Statements were approved and signed on 9th June 2021 by the Chief Executive and Planning Regulator.