



**Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála**
Office of the
Planning Regulator

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

CONTENTS

	Page
General Information	3
Governance Statement and Planning Regulator's Report	4-8
Statement on Internal Control	9-11
Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General	12-13
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, Park House. Grangegorman, 191-193A North Circular Road, Dublin 7, D07 EWW4
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 Corporate Services Caren Gallagher – Director of Research, Training and Public Awareness
Telephone Number:	01 854 6700
Website:	www.opr.ie
Email:	info@opr.ie
Auditors:	Comptroller and Auditor General 3A Mayor Street Upper Dublin 1 D01 PF72
Bankers:	Danske Bank, Corporates & Institutions International House 3 Harbourmaster Place IFSC, Dublin 1 D01 K8F1
Solicitors:	Fieldfisher 45 Mespil Road Dublin 4 D04 W2F1

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, the 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 31 December 2023.

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 in April 2019 by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, as the Planning Regulator and Chief Executive of 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 established a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in 2020. 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. The FARC met 4 times in 2023.

Members of the Committee are:-

External Members:

Lorraine O'Donoghue (Chairperson)
Breda Coss
Paula Nyland

Executive Members:

Joanna McBride, Director of Corporate Services
Enda Torsney, Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Valerie Halpin – Secretary to the Committee (until June 2023)
Rebecca Doran – Secretary to the Committee (from July 2023)

Schedule of Attendance, Fees and Expenses

No fee was paid to FARC members during the period of 2023. Expenses incurred and claimed by FARC members during the year included travel and subsistence amounted to €119 (2022: €161). The following is the schedule of meetings held by the FARC during 2023.

Attendance	Meeting dates				Expenses
	23-Feb-23	21-Jun-23	10-Oct-23	7-Dec-23	
Lorraine O'Donoghue	✓	✓	✓	✓	€119
Breda Coss	✓	X	✓	✓	-
Joanna McBride	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Enda Torsney	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Paula Nyland	✓	✓	✓	✓	-

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

Key Personnel Changes

Caren Gallagher was appointed as Director of Research, Training and Public Awareness in April 2023, following an open recruitment process. The post was sanctioned by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. As a result of this new post, the Research, Training and Public Awareness responsibilities, which were previously under the remit of Director of Corporate Services have been transferred to the Director of Research, Training and Public Awareness.

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, National Development Plan Delivery 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	2023	2022
€60,000	- €69,999	4	3
€70,000	- €79,999	4	6
€80,000	- €89,999	3	1
€90,000	- €99,999	2	2
€100,000	- €109,999	-	2
€110,000	- €119,999	2	-
€120,000	- €129,999	1	1
€130,000	- €139,999	-	-
€140,000	- €149,999	-	-
€150,000	- €159,999	-	1
€160,000	- €169,999	1	-

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.

	2023	2022
	€	€
Legal services	110,570	200,326
Professional planning services	131,666	189,120
Health and safety services and procurement services	3,411	6,653
Human resources services	5,843	37,636
Total consultancy costs	251,490	433,735
Consultancy costs capitalised	-	-
Consultancy costs charged to the Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves	251,490	433,735
Total	251,490	433,735

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.

	2023	2022
	€	€
Legal fees - legal proceedings	47,695	44,974
Total	47,695	44,974

Travel and Subsistence Expenditure

Travel and subsistence expenditure are categorised as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Domestic		
- Committee Members	119	161
- Employees	11,006	9,084
International		
- Committee Member	-	-
- Employees	356	-
Total	11,481	9,245

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

Hospitality Expenditure

The Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves includes the following hospitality expenditure:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Staff hospitality	2,726	2,772
Total	<u>2,726</u>	<u>2,772</u>

No client hospitality related expenditure was incurred in 2023 (2022: €Nil).

Statement of Compliance

In line with the Oversight Agreement between the OPR and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 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, National Development Plan Delivery 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 that of a corporation sole. The Planning Regulator, supported by the four Directors, 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: 16 May 2024

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

Upon establishment of the OPR in April 2019, an arrangement was put in place whereby transactional processing of payroll for OPR staff was carried out by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through the National Shared Services Office. This arrangement remained in place in 2023.

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. The membership of the Committee has been strengthened to consist of a majority of non-executive members.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

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.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

Internal Audit and Audit 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.

Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Formal procedures have been established for monitoring control processes and control deficiencies, which are communicated to the EMT, to other management personnel and to those responsible for taking corrective action, 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 EU procurement directives and 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. 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 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 2023. 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 developed and implemented for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 is effective.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

Internal Financial Control Issues

No weaknesses in internal controls were identified in relation to 2023 that require disclosure in the financial statements.



Niall Cussen
Chief Executive and Planning Regulator

Date: 16 May 2024

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 2023 as required under the provisions of section 31AG of the Planning and Development Act 2000. 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 2023 and of its income and expenditure for 2023 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

16 May 2024

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 annual financial statements in the form prescribed under section 31AG of the Planning and Development Act 2000

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 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.

I 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.

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.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

**STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND RETAINED REVENUE RESERVES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Notes	Year ended 2023 €	Year ended 2022 €
Income			
Oireachtas Grants	2	3,987,762	3,587,678
Other Income	3	10,111	858
Total Income		3,997,873	3,588,536
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	4	2,801,219	2,233,658
Upkeep and Overheads	5	327,240	269,664
General Expenses	6	561,837	489,220
Services Expenses	7	194,288	594,553
Depreciation	8	41,936	34,065
Total Expenditure		3,926,520	3,621,160
(Deficit) / Surplus for the period before appropriations		71,353	(32,624)
Transferred from/(to) Capital Account		(81,604)	25,362
(Deficit) / Surplus for the period after appropriations		(10,251)	(7,262)
Balance brought forward at 1 January		123,722	130,984
Balance brought forward at 31 December		113,471	123,722

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 18 form part of these Financial Statements.



Niall Cussen
Chief Executive and Planning Regulator

Date: 16 May 2024

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
<u>Non-Current Assets</u>			
Property, plant and equipment	8	236,598	154,994
<u>Current Assets</u>			
Receivables	9	154,658	97,342
Cash and cash equivalents	10	175,806	326,554
Total Current Assets		330,464	423,896
<u>Current Liabilities (Amount falling due within one year)</u>			
Payables	11	41,993	125,174
Net Current Assets		288,471	298,722
Total Assets		525,069	453,716
Provision for Liabilities	12	175,000	175,000
Net Assets		350,069	278,716
<u>Representing</u>			
Retained Revenue Reserves		113,471	123,722
Capital Account	13	236,598	154,994
		350,069	278,716

The Statement of Cash Flows and Notes 1 to 18 form part of these Financial Statements.



Niall Cussen
Chief Executive and Planning Regulator

Date: 16 May 2024

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Year ended 2023 €	Year ended 2022 €
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Deficit for the period		(10,251)	(7,262)
Transfer to/(from) Capital Account		81,604	(25,362)
Depreciation charge		41,936	34,065
(Increase) / Decrease in Receivables		(57,316)	16,732
(Decrease) / Increase in Payables		(83,181)	50,428
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities		(27,208)	68,601
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Payments to acquire property, plant and equipment	8	(125,154)	(9,416)
Disposal of assets		1,614	713
Net Cashflows from Investing Activities		(123,540)	(8,703)
(Decrease) / increase in cash and cash equivalents		(150,748)	59,898
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of period		326,554	266,656
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		175,806	326,554

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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, 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 31 December 2023 have been prepared in accordance with the applicable legislation and with FRS 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council in the UK.

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, National Development Plan Delivery 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 31 December 2023.

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%

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 2023

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) Payroll

Upon establishment of the OPR in April 2019, an arrangement was put in place whereby transactional processing of payroll for OPR staff was carried out by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through the National Shared Services Office and this arrangement remained in place in 2023. Due to the nature of this arrangement, the OPR's financial statements do not include a general payroll accrual or unutilised annual leave accrual at year end, however it is intended that valuation and accrual of same will commence once the OPR assumes the management of its own payroll function in the near future.

j) 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, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, or
- ii. The Single Public Service Pension Scheme, which commenced with effect from 1 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.

k) 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.

l) Critical Accounting Judgments and Estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the statement of financial position date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. However, the nature of estimation means that actual outcomes could differ from those estimates. The following judgements have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Provisions: The management makes provisions for legal and constructive obligations, which it knows to be outstanding at the period end date. These provisions are generally made based on historical or other pertinent information, adjusted for recent trends where relevant. However, they are estimates of the financial costs of events that may not occur for some years. As a result of this and the level of uncertainty attaching to the final outcomes, the actual out-turn may differ significantly from that estimated.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Impairment of property, plant and equipment: Assets that are subject to amortisation are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less cost to sell and value in use.

Depreciation and Residual Values: The OPR has reviewed the asset lives and associated residual values of all fixed asset classes, and in particular, the useful economic life and residual values of fixtures and fittings, and have concluded that asset lives and residual values are appropriate.

	Year ended 2023	Year ended 2022
	€	€
2. Oireachtas Grants		
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	3,987,762	3,587,678

The OPR is funded from the Vote of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, through subhead D.5. This funding covers current (operational) expenditure of the OPR. The OPR did not receive funding in relation to capital projects

	Year ended 2023	Year ended 2022
	€	€
3. Other Income		
Recoupment of cost in relation to Freedom of Information requests	100	190
Bank interest received	10,011	668
	10,111	858

	Year ended 2023	Year ended 2022
	€	€
4. Staff Costs		
Wages and Salaries	2,429,948	2,017,360
PRSI	245,420	201,135
Recruitment costs	49,675	13,281
Agency costs	76,176	1,882
Total Staff Cost	2,801,219	2,233,658

Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC) was deducted in line with statutory requirements. €85,616 (2022: €76,676) of ASC has been deducted in 2023 and retained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

a) Employee Numbers

The number of staff at year-end (full time equivalents) was 36 (2022: 28).

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 2023 of the Chief Executive Officer, who was appointed on 3 April 2019, is as follows:

	Year ended 2023 €	Year ended 2022 €
Mr. Niall Cussen, CEO	<u>166,909</u>	<u>159,858</u>

The CEO did not receive any performance related payments or any other benefit in kind during the period. The CEO's pension entitlements do not extend beyond the standard entitlements in the model public sector defined benefit superannuation scheme.

	Year ended 2023 €	Year ended 2022 €
5. Upkeep and Overheads		
Rent and Service Charges	266,463	229,198
Telephone and Electricity	12,554	5,299
Repairs and Maintenance	22,536	11,769
Insurance on Premises	25,687	23,398
	<u>327,240</u>	<u>269,664</u>

Increase in Rent and Service Charges, Telephone and Electricity and Repairs and Maintenance due to increased office space due to the expanding staff complement of the OPR.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Year ended 2023	Year ended 2022
	€	€
6. General Expenses		
Travel and Subsistence	11,481	9,511
IT Expenses	85,394	95,135
Printing, Post and Stationery	14,891	14,428
Conference and Seminar Costs	4,023	5,310
Communication	37,694	57,267
Staff Learning and Development	62,012	41,983
Research, Education and Public Awareness	326,613	254,208
Other Office Expenses	18,115	10,665
Loss on disposal	1,614	713
	561,837	489,220

Increase in statutory research activities in 2023 represents increased activity due to expanding operations. Communication expense higher in 2022 due to the production of additional cyclical OPR publications versus 2023. Increase in Staff Learning and Development and other general expenses is related to the expanding staffing complement.

	Year ended 2023	Year ended 2022
	€	€
7. Service Expenses		
Legal	74,326	245,300
Services Contracts	9,766	246,892
Accounting	57,453	62,767
Payroll	11,649	-
Internal Audit	24,594	24,594
External Audit	16,500	15,000
	194,288	594,553

Legal expenses were higher in 2022 due to Judicial Review proceedings in which the OPR was a notice party. Services Contracts expenditure decreased in 2023 due to increased staffing complement allowing for in-house delivery of projects and reduced outsourcing. In 2023 the OPR was charged by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for payroll processing costs in relation to OPR staff.

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

8. Property, Plant and Equipment

	<i>Furniture & Fittings</i>	<i>Office Equipment</i>	<i>IT Equipment</i>	<i>Total</i>
				€
<u>Cost</u>				
At 01 January 2023	112,202	45,361	70,557	228,120
Additions for the period	69,102	12,448	43,604	125,154
Reclass of Assets	-	1,915	(1,915)	-
Disposals	-	(4,649)	(1,770)	(6,419)
At 31 December 2023	181,304	55,075	110,476	346,855
<u>Accumulated Depreciation</u>				
At 01 January 2023	27,005	20,785	25,336	73,126
Depreciation charge for the period	14,440	10,717	16,779	41,936
Reclass of Assets		678	(678)	-
Disposals		(3,805)	(1,000)	(4,805)
At 31 December 2023	41,445	28,375	40,437	110,257
<u>Net Book Value</u>				
At 31 December 2023	139,859	26,700	70,039	236,598
At 31 December 2022	85,197	24,576	45,221	154,994

9. Receivables

	Year ended 2023	Year ended 2022
	€	€
Prepayments	154,658	97,342
	154,658	97,342

All receivables are due within one year.

10. Cash and cash equivalents

	Year ended 2023	Year ended 2022
	€	€
Cash in Bank	175,722	326,303
Petty Cash	84	251
	175,806	326,554

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

11. Payables

	Year ended 2023 €	Year ended 2022 €
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Creditors and accruals	28,319	94,209
Credit Card	1,762	2,910
Professional Services Withholding Tax	8,312	21,266
Value Added Tax	3,600	6,789
	41,993	125,174

	Year ended 2023 €	Year ended 2022 €
--	----------------------------	----------------------------

12. Provision for Liabilities

Legal Costs

Amount at the start of the year	175,000	175,000
Provision made during the year	-	-
Amount charged against the provision	-	-
Amount at the end of the year	175,000	175,000

During 2021, a local authority initiated Judicial Review proceedings against the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in which the OPR was a notice party. The High Court judgment in Q4 2021 and subsequent appeal in Q2 2022 upheld the local authority's challenge against the respondents. At year-end 2023, the OPR continues to await notification of the actual costs for payment pertaining to the ruling. A provision has been made, in consultation with the OPR's legal advisors, as a best estimate of the costs, which are probable to be apportioned to the OPR as a notice party in the proceedings.

	Year ended 2023 €	Year ended 2022 €
13. Capital Account		
At 01 January	154,994	180,356
<u>Transfer from / (to) Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves</u>		
Funding of Fixed Assets	125,154	9,416
Amount released on disposal of fixed assets	(1,614)	(713)
Amortisation in line with asset depreciation policy	(41,936)	(34,065)
Balance at 31 December	236,598	154,994

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

14. Lease Commitments

The OPR has commitments in respect of a lease on office accommodation at 4th Floor (west and north wing), Park House, 191-193A North Circular Road, Dublin 7. This is held by way of a lease, which is in place until 11th October 2030. In 2023, the OPR extended the scope of the lease to include the north wing in addition to the west wing due to expanding staffing complement. The annual rent for west and north wing in 2023 is €220,631 exclusive of VAT.

Lease commitments

At 31 December 2023, the OPR had the following future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable leases:

	As at 31 Dec 2023	As at 31 Dec 2022
	€	€
Payable within 1 year	220,631	160,397
Payable within 2 – 5 years	882,524	641,588
Payable after 5 years	386,104	441,092
	<u>1,489,259</u>	<u>1,243,077</u>

15. Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments as at 31 December 2023.

16. 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, National Development Plan Delivery 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 2023.

Key Management in the OPR consists of the Chief Executive and Planning Regulator, Deputy Planning Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations, Director of Planning Reviews and Examinations, Director of Corporate Services and Director of Research, Training and Public Awareness. Total remuneration paid to key management personnel in 2023 was €583,370 in respect of the Chief Executive and four Directors (the 2022 charge of €488,231 related to the Chief Executive and three Directors).

17. 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.

18. Approval of Financial Statements

The Financial Statements were approved and signed on 16 May 2024 by the Chief Executive and Planning Regulator.