

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SECOND REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

The Public Accounts Committee presented its second report to Parliament on 26 January 2022. The Committee considered the Report of the Auditor-General for the Financial Year 2020/2021 and discussed issues which could impact spending, financial governance and controls in the public sector arising from this report and which pertained to (a) Disruptions to Global Supply Chain; (b) Re-evaluating baseline spending in the “new normal”; (c) Working-from-Home and hybrid working arrangements; and (d) Singapore Green Plan.

2 In the course of its enquiry, the Committee held four meetings and considered memoranda from various Ministries and public agencies including:

- (a) Ministry of Communications and Information
- (b) Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
- (c) Ministry of Education
- (d) Ministry of Finance
- (e) Ministry of Health
- (f) Ministry of Home Affairs
- (g) Ministry of National Development
- (h) Ministry of Transport
- (i) Public Service Division (Prime Minister’s Office)
- (j) Smart Nation and Digital Government Group (Prime Minister’s Office)

3 The Committee also invited senior officials from the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service Division to make oral representations on matters contained in the Report of the Auditor-General for the Financial Year 2020/2021 and on the abovementioned issues.

4 The Second Report of the Public Accounts Committee [Parl 12 of 2022] is attached.

5 Ms Foo Mee Har, the Chairman of the Committee said, *“The Committee stressed the need to deploy systems thinking at the Whole-of-Government level to address fundamental root causes as well as strengthening of capabilities and competencies to address weaknesses and lapses in procurement and contract management as well as IT controls as highlighted by the Report of the Auditor-General. Technology and analytics should be deployed to prevent, detect as well as assess effectiveness. The Committee called on more structural setups such as Centres of Excellence and centralisation of capabilities and expertise such as those implemented for facilities, building and infrastructure management.*

6 *The Committee was of the view that disruptions to global supply chains arising from COVID-19 pandemic and other risk factors would require the Government to shift its operating models from ‘just in time’ to ‘just in case’ where buffers and stockpiles would become the new planning parameters. This would strain government financial resources, requiring a re-think of government baseline spending in the ‘new normal’.*

7 *As Singapore moves to become a COVID-resilient nation, there is also a need to evaluate the public sector workforce – both in terms of the size of the workforce and new skills required. The Committee discussed how the benchmarks used for the pre-pandemic manpower management framework would still be relevant for the new normal and enquired about plans to re-examine manpower planning parameters to right siting, right sizing, right skilling and right scoping of the public sector headcount.*

8 *The Committee expressed concerns over cybersecurity risks, governance, controls as well as quality of public service delivery with more public officers working from home and accessing Government systems as hybrid working arrangements become a permanent feature of the public sector workforce.*

9 *As the Government continues to develop the Singapore Green Plan, the Committee emphasised the need to focus on the governance framework for borrowings and spending, carbon tax management as well as to equip the Public Service with the requisite skillsets in the areas of green financing, carbon accounting standards, climate science and adaptation of new technologies.”*

**Office of the Clerk of Parliament**  
**26 January 2022**

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