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PRESS RELEASE

Government has made limited progress in implementing OAG and PAC recommendations made to improve Cayman’s healthcare system and welfare programmes

The report “*Follow-up on past PAC recommendations 2021 – Report 1,*” was issued today by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG).

The report provides an update on the Government’s progress with implementing recommendations made by the PAC for two reports that the OAG previously assessed as Red (limited progress) and Amber (some progress) in October 2018. The reports re-assessed are *Government Programmes Supporting Those in Need* (May 2015), and *Ensuring Quality Healthcare and a Healthy Population* (January 2017). This time, the OAG has assessed the Government’s progress with implementing the recommendations for both these reports as Red (limited progress).

“The Government’s progress with implementing recommendations made by the PAC on two reports covering the significant public services areas of healthcare and social assistance is very disappointing,” Ms. Winspear notes. “The original recommendations made by my office date back to 2015 and 2017. The previous PAC held hearings on these two reports a number of times and issued its own reports with additional recommendations, the last being in April 2019. Very little has changed since then.”

Winspear continues “In this review of progress on the healthcare recommendations, we find that Cayman still has no overarching strategy or policy for healthcare and a legislative framework that is out dated and deficient. As a result Cayman’s health care system is not providing best value to its people and practices for inspecting health care facilities, registering health care practitioners and developing Caymanian Doctors are still lacking.”

With regard to the Government’s welfare programmes, Winspear says “There is still no co-ordinated social assistance strategy and so it is not clear if the most vulnerable in our society are being adequately supported, and it is likely that there continue to be inconsistencies in the eligibility criteria for accessing support and gaps and overlaps in provision. The Poor Persons (Relief) Law dates from 1997 and has still not been modernised to be fit for Cayman in 2021, despite assurances to the PAC in 2018 that this was under review.”

The early part of the report provides a status update on 15 PAC reports tabled in the Parliament between September 2018 and December 2020. The report shows that as at 22 February 2021, when Parliament was dissolved before the April 2021 election, the Government had tabled formal responses to 9 PAC reports but only 3 of these responses were tabled within the 3-month timescale required by the Parliament’s Standing Orders. The Government had not responded to 5 PAC reports.

“It is disappointing that since my last report in 2018 on Government’s progress with implementing PAC recommendations, the Government has fallen significantly behind.” Ms. Winspear continues. “Of the nine Government responses tabled, only three were done so within the required timescale and the Government has not yet responded to five PAC reports, some dating back to 2018. Implementing PAC and my recommendations is not just a tick box exercise but something that can and should deliver real service improvements that will positively impact peoples’ lives.”

More information about the report can be obtained by contacting Sue Winspear at (345) 938-3201 or Angela Cullen, Deputy Auditor General (Performance Audit) at (345) 922-3220.

This report and the original OAG reports on which this report is based are available at www.auditorgeneral.gov.ky.

Notes to the editor:

1. The Public Accounts Committee considers reports made by the Auditor General and generally endorse the recommendations made by the Auditor General in her report and make further recommendations of their own based on the witness hearings they hold at the time.
2. The Cayman Islands Government is required to formally respond to the PAC recommendations within three months of the PAC laying an Auditor General report in the House of Parliament.
3. The OAG has re-assessed Government’s progress with implementing recommendations for the following two reports as having made **limited progress**:
 - *Government Programmes Supporting Those in Need* (May 2015)
 - *Ensuring Quality healthcare and a Healthy Population* (January 2017)
4. The OAG has provided a status update on the Government’s formal responses to 15 PAC reports tabled between September 2018 and December 2020. See Exhibit 1 of the report. The five PAC reports that have not yet been responded to by the Government are (date in brackets is when the PAC report was tabled in the House of Parliament):
 - Report on the Segregated Insurance Fund 2015/16 Accounts (6 September 2018)
 - Report on the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority 2015/16 Accounts (6 September 2018)
 - Report of the Information and Communications Technology Authority 2015/16 Accounts (22 November 2018)
 - Report of the Office of the Auditor General on *Follow-Up of past PAC recommendations - October 2018* (10 April 2019)
 - Report of the Office of the Auditor General on the *Efficiency and Effectiveness of Summary Courts – November 2019* (1 July 2020)
5. The OAG plans to prepare and publish a series of reports following up on past PAC recommendations during 2021. This report is the first in the series.