

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 12 MAY 2022

The Committee met in **Public** Session at 09.31 a.m., a quorum being present.

The following Members were present:

Deputies: Brian Stanley (Cathaoirleach), Colm Burke, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, Matt Carthy, Cormac Devlin, Alan Dillon, Paul McAuliffe, Imelda Munster, Catherine Murphy (Leas-Chathaoirleach), Verona Murphy, James O'Connor, Séan Sherlock.

Permanent

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

1. Witnesses Examined

University of Limerick

- Professor Kerstin Mey, President
- Ms Mary Harney, Chancellor
- Mr. Gary Butler, Chief Financial Performance Officer

Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science:

- Mr. Keith Moynes, Assistant Secretary, Higher Education Policy Division
- Ms Emma Leonard, Principal Officer, Climate Action and Capital Planning Unit

Matters for discussion

- **Financial Statements 2020: University of Limerick**

The Committee suspended at 11.06.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11.18.

It was agreed that the Clerk would request any follow-up information and carry out any agreed actions arising from the meeting. It was also agreed to note and publish the opening statement and briefing documents provided to the Committee for the meeting.

The Committee suspended at 12.38.

The Committee resumed in **Private** Session at 13.35.

2. Private Session

Sensitive correspondence		Decision
R1208 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 27/04/2022	Note. It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1213 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 04/05/2022	Note. It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

It was agreed to request the Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight to consent to the Committee of Public Accounts directing the University of Limerick to provide the Committee with the KPMG report into the governance arrangements pertaining to the University's purchase of a site in Limerick city centre in 2019.

The Committee went into **Public** session at 14.36.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5 May 2022 were agreed.

4. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were no financial statements and accounts laid before the Dáil between 2 and 6 May 2022.

5. Correspondence

Correspondence received		Decision
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements		
R1231 PAC33	Correspondence received from Professor Kerstin Mey, President, University of Limerick, dated 06/05/2022	Note and publish.
R1234 PAC33	Correspondence received from Professor Kerstin Mey, President, University of Limerick, dated 011/05/2022	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision

Correspondence received		
R1217 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. David Moloney, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 28/04/2022	Note and publish. It was agreed to request the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to advise the Committee if it has an estimate of the final costing of the National Children's Hospital and, if so, to share it with the Committee.
R1218 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Katherine Licken, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, dated 28/04/2022	Note and publish. It was agreed to request Sport Ireland to provide the Committee with a copy of its Campus Masterplan once it is complete.
R1219 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Fergal Costello, Secretary General, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 28/04/2022	Note and publish.
R1220 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Feargal Harnett, Government Accounting Unit, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, dated 27/04/2022	Note and publish.
R1221 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Anne Graham, Chief Executive Officer, National Transport Authority, dated 29/04/2022	Note and publish.
R1222 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Mark Griffin, Secretary General, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, dated 29/04/2022	Note and publish. It was agreed to request the Department to: - clarify if sanctions will apply in respect of the three and a half months of delays that the Department does not accept as being attributable to reasons beyond NBI's control; and - confirmation of the nature of the penalty, whether it is a financial penalty or otherwise.
R1223 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Mattie McCabe, Board Secretary, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, dated 29/04/2022	Note and publish. It was agreed to request the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications for an information note providing an update regarding how it is factoring in the changed environment in relation to inflation in both labour and materials in respect of the National Home Retrofit Scheme. Request the Department of Transport for a copy of the report in respect of modelling for the Climate Action Plan target that was undertaken by McKinsey.
R1224 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Vivienne Flood, Head of Public Affairs, RTÉ, dated 29/05/2022	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1225 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Laura Pathe, Clerk to the Committee, Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media, dated 02/05/2022	Note.

6. Work Programme

It was agreed to proceed with the proposed work programme.

It was also agreed to request the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to attend a meeting to examine the arrangements in place for accountability and transparency in the local government sector and to request representatives from the following bodies to attend the meeting:

- Local Government Audit Service; and
- National Oversight and Audit Commission.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee adjourned at 14.55 until Thursday 19 May 2022.



Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
19 May 2022