

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, 18 MAY 2023

The Committee met in **Private** Session at 09:33 a.m., a quorum being present.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 09:44 a.m.

The following Members were present:

Deputies: Brian Stanley (Cathaoirleach), John Brady, Colm Burke, Cormac Devlin, Paul McAuliffe, Imelda Munster, Catherine Murphy, Verona Murphy, Marc Ó Cathasaigh, James O'Connor.

Apologies: Deputy Alan Dillon

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

1. Witnesses Examined:

University of Limerick

- Professor Kerstin Mey, President
- Professor Shane Kilcommins, Provost
- Ms Rosemary Fogarty, Financial Controller
- Mr. Bobby O'Connor, Director, Human Resources
- Mr. John Kelly, Corporate Secretary

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

- Mr. Paul Lemass, Assistant Secretary, Head of Corporate Services and Capital Division
- Ms Elaine McWeeney, Assistant Principal Officer, Programme Development, Governance and Development Unit

Matters for discussion:

- **Financial Statements 2021**
 - University of Limerick

The Committee suspended at 11:03.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 11:14.

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 statements and briefing documents provided to the Committee for the meeting.

The Committee suspended at 12:58.

The Committee resumed in **Public** Session at 13:45.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11 May 2023 were agreed.

3. Financial Statements and Accounts

There were no financial statements and accounts presented to the Oireachtas library between 1 and 5 May 2023.

4. Correspondence

Correspondence received		
A – Briefing Documents and Opening Statements		Decision
R1890 PAC33	Correspondence received from Professor Kerstin Mey, President, University of Limerick, dated 12/05/2023	Note and publish.
R1897 PAC33	Correspondence received from Professor Kerstin Mey, President, University of Limerick, dated 12/05/2023	Note and publish.
B – Correspondence from Accounting Officers and/or Ministers and follow up to PAC meetings		Decision
R1875 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Chris Hopkins, Government Accounting Unit, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, dated 04/05/2023	Note and publish.
R1877 PAC33	Correspondence received from Ms Carol Boate, Regulator, Regulator of the National Lottery, dated 05/05/2023	Note and publish.

Correspondence received		
R1879 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, dated 09/05/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request further information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whether consideration has been given to purchasing buildings to accommodate applicants for international protection rather than use long-term rentals and who would manage property purchased for this purpose (local authorities or a separate State agency); - re-submi Appendix 1 - information re Kildare not included in Table 1 – Location and Property Type (Numbers) or Table 2 – Location and Property Type (Capacity); - further details regarding the structure of contracts, e.g. is the cost to the State adjusted accordingly if the capacity or number of people accommodated at any given location fluctuates; - details of all additional costs e.g. security/utilities etc.; - details of due diligence undertaken in relation to the sourcing of accommodation and do people come forward with accommodation or does the Department proactively seek suitable buildings; - how many buildings were identified as suitable for accommodation by local authorities and not taken up by the Department, and why were they not taken up; - a breakdown of the length of time applicants for International Protection are availing of accommodation by year: 1 year, 1-2 years, 2-3 years etc. <p>It was also agreed to request the Department of Justice to prepare the following for the meeting on 25 May 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the current status of plans to reduce the length of time applicants for International Protection are in Direct Provision and an explanation of why anyone would be waiting more than 2 years for a decision on an application. <p>It was also agreed to request the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breakdown of processing times of applications for International Protection and targets for how long it takes to process cases and the numbers of people who are waiting for a decision for: 1 year, 1-2 years, 2-3 years. etc.

Correspondence received		
R1883 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Michael Corban, Assistant Principal, Department of Health, dated 09/05/2023	<p>Note and publish.</p> <p>It was agreed to request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - further details of expenditure in 2022 per county in the Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) Area 8 in respect of the dental treatment service scheme; - how much is budgeted in 2023 for the scheme in Laois and Offaly; and - what progress has been made regarding recruitment of dentists for the scheme. <p>The Committee requests that consideration is given to providing detailed information regarding expenditure on medical services broken down by county as well as CHO area.</p>
R1886 PAC33	Correspondence received from Mr. Michael Corban, Assistant Principal, Department of Health, dated 10/05/2023	Note and publish.
C - Correspondence from and related to private individuals and any other correspondence		Decision
R1876 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 05/05/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.
R1878 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 08/05/2023	Note.

5. Work Programme

The Committee agreed its draft work programme.

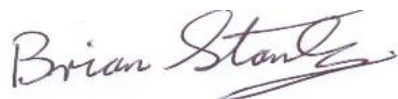
6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Committee went into **private** session at 14:19.

Sensitive - for consideration in Private session		Decision
R1861 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 27/04/2023	It was agreed to hold over the item for further consideration at the meeting on 1 June 2023.
R1884 PAC33	Correspondence received from an individual, dated 10/05/2023	It was agreed to advise the correspondent of the Committee's decision.

The Committee **adjourned** at 14:37 until Thursday 25 May 2023.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Brian Stanley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Brian Stanley, T.D.
Cathaoirleach
25 May 2023