

Minutes of Special Meeting of Finance & Capital Investment Committee meeting

Date: Wednesday, 18 December 2024
Time: 3.30pm
Location: Microsoft Teams
Chairperson: Professor Patrick Prendergast
Attendees: Professor Veronica Campbell
 Mr Mark Dunne
 Dr Frances Hardiman
 Ms Carol Lynch
 Mr Patrick McCormack
 Mr Alan Quirke
 Ms Elaine Sheridan, VP Governance/University Secretary
 Mr Cormac O'Toole, VP Finance/Financial Controller
Apologies: Ms Louise Grubb
 Dr Helen Murphy
Secretariat: Mary Clare Coogan

Item Title	
1.	<u>Chairpersons Welcome:</u> <u>Chairpersons opening:</u> NOTED The Chairperson welcomed members to the meeting, and confirming the meeting was quorate, he commenced the business of the meeting. <u>Conflict of Interest Declaration:</u> NOTED The Chairperson asked members if they had any conflicts to declare, particularly associated with items on the agenda. No member present declared a conflict for this meeting. <u>Approval of minutes: 18 November 2024:</u> AGREED To approve the minutes of 18 November 2024 and publish on the website. <u>Matters arising:</u> NOTED There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Committee matters:**South East Technological University Financial Statements: 16 month period from 1 May 2022 to 31 August 2023:**

NOTED The VP Finance presented an overview of the process that had been undertaken to-date with regard to the preparation of the Financial Statements 2023, advising that the first draft was approved by the Finance & Capital Investment Committee in December 2023. The VP Finance noted that the cyber incident had delayed completion of same.

The committee were advised that the next steps in the process were as follows:

- Approval by Finance & Capital Investment Committee
- Approval by Audit & Risk Committee
- Approval by Governing Body
- Signing by Chairperson & President
- Submission to the C&AG
- Receipt of Audit Certificate
- Submission to HEA & DFHERIS

The VP Finance highlighted the changes made to the Financial Statements from the first draft to the final draft to ensure clarity, transparency and accuracy. He advised that overall, the financial result for the 16-month period is satisfactory, but noted the challenge in making meaningful comparisons with the 20-month period in terms of trends.

The VP Finance also provided an update to the committee on the University's progress with the Financial Statements for the period ending 31 August 2024, noting that again, the cyber incident had delayed the preparation of same. The first draft is expected to be available at the end of January 2025 and it is anticipated that they will then be presented to the Finance & Capital Investment Committee, Audit & Risk Committee and Governing Body for review and approval in February 2025, before being submitted to the C&AG for audit.

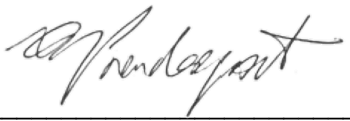
A discussion took place where the committee raised numerous queries and sought clarifications on various areas of the Financial Statements. In relation to agenda item 2.6 at the last meeting which involved a discussion on the issues affecting Novus, Ms C. Lynch raised a query about whether these issues would have any impact on the consolidated statements or notes to the Financial Statements. The VP Finance reassured the committee that while the issues being experienced by Novus are being monitored, they are currently not significant enough to affect the University's consolidated Financial Statements. As agreed at the last meeting, the University will carry out a review of the activities of Novus to assess how it can be structured more effectively going forward.

Mr McCormack referred to page 13 of the Financial Statements where it outlines that total of €613k was paid in consultancy fees, and asked for clarification on what types of services or activities these fees relate to.

ACTION VP Finance to arrange for a more detailed breakdown of consultancy fees to be circulated to the committee following today's meeting.

In relation the audit of the Financial Statements for the period ending 31 August 2023, the Chairperson queried whether the committee would be presented with any documentation or report regarding the audit. The VP Finance confirmed that a Management Letter would be issued in early 2025, and he suggested that if it is deemed appropriate, the University could invite the auditors to meet with both the Audit & Risk Committee and the Finance & Capital Investment Committee. This would provide an opportunity for the auditors to present their findings and comments on the Management Letter directly to the committees. Any issues or concerns that arose during the audit could also be discussed. Ms Lynch noted it had previously been suggested that a joint meeting of both committees be arranged, and proposed that this would be an appropriate opportunity for such a meeting to take place. She also stated it was her understanding that the Audit & Risk Committee and the Finance & Capital Investment Committee would be presented with a full audit report. The VP Finance informed the committee that the Deputy Director of Audit in the office of the C&AG has issued an email to the University confirming that the audit is complete and the Financial Statements for the period ending August 2023 have been

	cleared for signing. This correspondence has been uploaded to the Teams environment for the committee's reference. A draft Letter of Representation has also been uploaded, outlining the responsibilities and representations made by the University. This letter confirms that all matters have been properly undertaken and includes all the relevant declarations. The Chairperson and President are required to sign this letter and will accompany the Financial Statements. It was noted that the Audit & Risk Committee and the Governing Body would also be reviewing all of the documentation discussed by this committee. ACTION A joint meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee and the Finance & Capital Investment Committee will be scheduled, with the auditors in attendance, to 1) discuss the findings, comments, issues or concerns on the Financial Statements for the period ending 31 August 2023, and 2) to review the Financial Statements for the year ending 31 August 2024. AGREED To recommend South East Technological University Financial Statements: 16-month period from 1 May 2022 to 31 August 2023 to the Governing Body for approval at their next meeting.
3.	<u>AOB:</u> <u>Novus: Draft Letter of Support</u> (information redacted)

Approved: 

Date: 13th February 2025