

Minutes of Finance & Capital Investment Committee meeting

Date: Thursday, 20th December 2023
Time: 11.30am, via Microsoft Teams

Chair: Dr David Dempsey

Attendees: Professor Veronica Campbell
Mr Mark Dunne
Dr Frances Hardiman
Ms Carol Lynch
Mr Patrick McCormack
Mr Ray Ryan
Mr Alan Quirke

In attendance under the Code of Governance:

Ms Elaine Sheridan, Vice President for Corporate Affairs & Finance
Mr Cormac O’Toole, Vice President for Corporate Affairs

In attendance for Agenda Item 2

Ms Eleanor Rea, Finance Manager
Ms Críona Innseadúin, Finance Manager
Mr Brian Stenson, Finance Manager

Apologies: Professor Patrick Prendergast
Dr Helen Murphy
Ms Louise Grubb

Secretariat: Mary Clare Coogan

Item Title	
1.	<p><u>Chairpersons’ Welcome:</u></p> <p>a. <u>Chairperson’s opening</u> NOTED Dr David Dempsey agreed to chair the meeting in the absence of Professor Prendergast. He welcomed members to the meeting, and confirming the meeting was quorate, he commenced the business of the meeting.</p> <p>b. <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.</p>

2.

Committee matters:

South East Technological University Financial Statements: 16 months to 31 August 2023

NOTED Mr Stenson, Ms Rea and Ms Innseadúin were welcomed to the meeting. Mr O'Toole explained that the purpose of today's meeting was to provide the committee with the opportunity to review the Financial Statements before they are submitted to the C&AG for audit. When they are cleared by the C&AG they will be brought back to the committee for a full review.

He referred to the memo that was circulated with the Financial Statements and provided an update on the notes as follows:-

Note 1: Following discussion with the C&AG, they have confirmed they are happy that the amortisation adjustment as outlined is dealt with as a prior year adjustment.

Note 2: The auditors have taken different interpretations in relation to procurement on similar items in the legacy institutions, and because of changing thresholds during the period of the Financial Statements as well as the merger, the Executive wish to have discussions with the auditors before finalising the note on procurement.

Note 3: This has been dealt with.

Note 4: The Financial Statements have been received for the subsidiary and have been consolidated into the version being presented today.

Note 5: It was noted that the finance teams will continue to refine the Financial Statements until the date of submission.

Mr Stenson gave a very comprehensive and detailed presentation on the Consolidated Financial Statements for the 16-month period from 1 May 2022 to 31 August 2023, for South East Technological University, highlighting the main points. A robust discussion took place where numerous queries were raised and clarifications sought by the committee on various areas of the Financial Statements. It was noted that the Financial Statements presented were an updated version to the ones that were circulated to the committee and it incorporated the Corporate Governance Statement and the Statement on System of Internal Controls that had been circulated separately. There was also updated information in relation to Cash Flows, and to some of the notes to the Financial Statements. It was further noted that there was some information missing in the Corporate Governance Statement with regard to disclosures in connection with travel and subsistence, hospitality expenditure, legal costs and consultancy fees. The committee were advised that this information is currently being drafted up and will be added to the document. The committee were further advised that the Audit & Risk Committee were meeting on Thursday 22nd December and while they will be presented with the same information as presented here today, their main focus will be on the Corporate Governance Statement and the Statement on System of Internal Controls.

The area of internal audit was discussed and a query was raised as to who decides what areas in the university are to be audited. The committee were advised that the Audit & Risk Committee have responsibility for the internal audit function. A further query was raised as to whether the feedback from audits undertaken will be presented to the Finance & Capital Investment Committee for information purposes. Ms Sheridan advised that minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee are circulated to the Governing Body and they are presented with an Annual Report on their activities throughout the year and stated that this information could also be shared with the Finance & Capital Investment Committee. It was suggested that a joint meeting of both committees be held once a year. This will be taken on board by members of the Executive.

A query was raised in relation to the drop in student numbers and if there was any assessment undertaken in relation to this drop and what the financial implications were for the university. The committee were advised that the Executive Management Team have discussed this issue in great detail, and the area of retention will be a focus of work early in the New Year. This matter is also noted on the university Risk Register.

AGREED The committee were happy for the Financial Statements to be submitted for audit.

In closing the discussion, the Chairperson on behalf of the committee thanked everybody involved in the preparation of the Financial Statements and acknowledged the vast amount of work that was undertaken in the preparation of same, and wished all a very happy Christmas.

Mr O'Toole thanked the committee for accommodating the university by agreeing to meet so close to Christmas.