
From: Breslin, Jim [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday 29 July 2021 18:27
To: Alan Wall
Cc: Moynes, Keith; Orla Nugent; Pearl Cunningham; Orla Christle; Beausang, William; Leonard, Emma
Subject: RE: University of Limerick

Alan,

Thank you for the update.

In the light of the concerns remaining I certainly agree that we need to find a way of properly reviewing these issues and ensuring any weaknesses are addressed in a manner that can give assurance to everyone. I'd be happy for you to follow up as outlined.

You'll be aware that separately the Department and the HEA have been working on capital allocations to HEIs in respect of the annual devolved grant for minor capital. This year some dedicated funding will also be provided for equipment needs associated with the agreed expansion of CAO places in September and support for the provision of laptops to students to facilitate online access to learning and other resources. The CAO and laptop provisions are time-critical and need to proceed. However, in the context of the question which exists around UL's compliance with the capital management framework, as Accounting Officer I have decided to pause the general devolved grant for discretionary spending on capital to UL. We can revisit this as and when matters around capital management by UL are clarified and concerns allayed or weaknesses addressed.

Regards

Jim

From: Alan Wall [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday 29 July 2021 11:15
To: Breslin, Jim [REDACTED]
Cc: Moynes, Keith [REDACTED]; Orla Nugent [REDACTED]; Pearl Cunningham [REDACTED]; Orla Christle [REDACTED]
Subject: University of Limerick

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Jim,

As you know, we are continuing to engage with University of Limerick about the acquisition of the Dunnes Stores site. As part of this process, we have also had sight of the McKenna report, commissioned by the Governing Authority (GA), in relation to two sets of internal complaints. This report raises very serious and broad issues about how the university functions and we are currently considering its implications.

In addition, we have been probing the Annual Governance Statement of Compliance which, in 2020, gave the HEA signed assurances in relation to governance practices in 2018/2019, and specifically in relation to capital activities during the period the Dunnes site was acquired. UL management have indicated that their Audit and Risk

Committee (ARC) advised that it could be signed off, and while we are asking for further information, I can't understand why UL GA and ARC didn't inform the HEA of the issues around the Dunnes site through the AGS. We have also seen the Governing Authority minutes in relation to the acquisition of the Dunnes site, and later minutes regarding the subsequent decision by the Authority to kick off the KPMG report into process. Again, serious issues arise.

In all of this, and some other matters which we are aware of, there is a disturbing picture of the internal workings of UL emerging, which I think need to be investigated properly and addressed. Ideally, I would like a full governance review to be carried out, as well as HR, Procurement and Internal Audit processes to be examined. Regrettably, as both our and the Department's legal advice makes clear, the HEA cannot cause this to happen.

I am considering how we can still move this forward however, given how serious I feel the matters arising are. A proposed solution would be to approach the chair of the GA and ask her to directly commission a review for the GA, based on agreed TOR and carried out independently. Any recommendations of such a report would need to be managed by the Governing Authority and we would require their assurances that such recommendations are being implemented. While this is an unusual approach, I think it is warranted in these circumstances. I would be grateful to have your views

Best regards

Alan

Dr Alan Wall

Chief Executive Officer

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