



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board



Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board

Minutes

23 March 2021

Date: 23 March 2021
Time: 3.30pm
Venue: Online via Microsoft Teams

In light of the HSE guidelines on Covid 19 and the requirement for social distancing this meeting was facilitated virtually through Microsoft Teams.

Attendance: Tómas Breathnach, Eileen Brophy, Fergal Browne, Caitlín Mhic Cárthaigh, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Peter Cleere, Laura Conheady, Deirdre Cullen, Andrea Dalton, Eamonn Doheny, Fidelis Doherty, Ger Frisby, Matthew Kenny, Patrick O’Neill, Jenny O’ Regan Byrne, Noel Phelan, Clare Ryan, Adrienne Wallace

Also in attendance: Chief Executive Eileen Curtis; Director of Further Education and Training Martha Bolger; Director of Schools Pauline Egan, Director of Organisation Support and Development Liam Scott
Executive support Amy Deering

Apologies: Michael Delaney, Richard Manogue, Brian O’ Donoghue

Chairperson Peter Cleere presided at the meeting

1. Conflict of Interest

At the start of the meeting, the Chairperson reminded members about procedures for dealing with any potential conflict of interest arising during a board meeting:

The ETB Act of 2013 and the Code of Governance (2019) both state that a member of an ETB board must absent himself/herself when the board is deliberating or deciding on matters in which that member has an interest. He/she should not take any part in any deliberation of the

board relating to the matter, should not influence, or seek to influence, a decision to be made in relation to the matter and should not vote on a decision relating to the matter.

2. Condolences and congratulations

Condolences were extended to those recently bereaved.

3. Minutes of board meeting held on 23 February 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 had been circulated to board members in advance (Document 230321 – 02). The minutes were taken as read. The minutes of the meeting were proposed by Patrick O’ Neill seconded by Caitlín Mhic Cárthaigh and agreed. The minutes were recorded as a true record of the proceedings of the board meeting held on 23 February 2021.

4. Matters arising from minutes

No matters arising

5. Correspondence

Department of Education Circular Letters – to be implemented

- 0015/2021 Update to the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme – Prioritisation of Funding
- 0016/2021 Prescribed Material for the Junior Cycle Examination in 2023 and Leaving Certificate Examination in 2023

Other Departmental correspondence – for information

- Letter DFHERIS- Governing Body Carlow IT
- Email DES- Service Plan- confirmation of receipt
- DCEDIY – Details of Grant Conditions for 2021
- DCEDIY – LGBT+ Initiative Allocation 2021
- DCEDIY – Payment Letter UBU/YICQ2

Other correspondence

- Office of C&AG – Letter of Engagement

6. Chief Executive’s Report

Chief Executive Eileen Curtis presented the Chief Executive’s report:

6.1 Corporate Governance and Administration

Business Continuity Planning - COVID 19

The Business Continuity Planning Group has continued to meet to ensure that the safe reopening of schools and centres takes place in line with guidance and in accordance with all infection prevention and control measures. There is ongoing review and monitoring of our risks in relation to service delivery and in respect of our internal controls and procedures. Seeking to ensure the health and safety of students and staff continues to be our key priority. Special needs and fifth and sixth year students have returned to school and there is currently very limited managed access for adult learners to engage in time critical practical elements of their courses.

Annual Financial Statements for 2020

The KCETB Annual Accounts for 2020 have been completed and will be submitted to the C&AG by the deadline of 31 March 2021. Thanks from the Board and Chief Executive were extended to all staff who collaborated in the process, and to the Finance and Audit and Risk Committees for the role they play in ensuring that KCETB upholds high standards of governance.

The statement of internal control for 2020, signed by the Chair will be submitted with the accounts. The statement is based on the assurances provided by the Finance and Audit and Risk Committees in their reports to the Board (See items 9 (c) and (d)). All relevant matters are included in the Statement of Internal Control. Relevant documents pertaining to internal control were circulated to Board members for their consideration.

Statement of Strategy 2022 – 2026

The consultation phase for the preparation of our next Statement of Strategy 2022 – 2026 is currently taking place with a series of internal and external stakeholder engagement workshops taking place.

Following the consultation period, a series of themes will be identified and the executive will begin the process of identifying priorities and actions for the period.

Submission to Kilkenny County Council on the City and County Draft Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

A submission on behalf of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB was made identifying a number of key priorities in respect of service provision for the period ahead and in respect of the development of the Western Environs.

Annual Report 2020

A draft Annual Report is being prepared and will be presented to the board for adoption. It is a requirement under the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs. A draft copy will be circulated in due course and members can suggest any relevant amendments at that stage.

6.2 Schools

Teaching and Learning

- Special Classes in post-primary schools reopened on 22 February. In supporting staff for this phased re-opening a briefing took place with school leaders on 11 February and a KCETB COVID-19 Health and Safety Refresher CPD took place virtually for SNAs and special needs teachers in special classes on 22 February.
- Leaving Certificate Classes returned to in- person teaching and learning on 01 March and Fifth Year students returned on 14 March.
- Remote teaching and learning continues for all other students. Significant efforts and support have been put in place to ensure live classes for students. It is hoped that all other year groups will return to school on 12 April.
- A briefing for school leaders and centre co-ordinators on the arrangements for Leaving Certificate 2021 took place on 25 and 26 February outlining the Accredited Grades process and the conventional Leaving Certificate arrangements. Schools have been assisting students in accessing the candidate portal system in registering their subject levels and preferred options for LC assessment.
- A briefing for school leaders also took place on the arrangements for the State Examinations in line with Circular Letter 07/2021. Orals will take place in schools from 26 March – 15 April and the Leaving Certificate Music Practical Examination will take place the second week of the Easter Break.
- The Junior Cycle examinations will not take place this year. Consequently, as in 2020, alternative arrangements are required for assessment and reporting on the learning achievements of students concluding Junior Cycle in 2021.
- A Professional Learning Event for Special Needs Assistants took place on 02 March on Microsoft Teams & Accessibility tools in supporting students in the virtual classroom.
- **Curricular Planning for the 2021/2022 year** is well underway.

Inspections

Evaluation of Remote Teaching and Learning (EORTL) Pilot Inspection - Kilkenny City Vocational School have taken part in this pilot and has engaged with the Inspectorate in its research work in identifying areas of good practice/challenges in schools, especially in context of school reopening to inform guidance and policy. The purpose of the pilot evaluation is:

- To collect information about how well the system is adapting to the challenges that it faces
- To inform the guidance produced by the Department and the advice offered to school leaders and teachers
- To impact on the supports that need to be provided to schools
- To help to ensure best opportunities for learners

The inspectorate engaged with KCVS in an evaluation on 25 and 26 February 2020.

Governance and Management of Schools

- Board of Management Meetings continue to place remotely in schools.
- An Addendum to the KCETB COVID Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Operation of Post-Primary schools issued to schools for adoption. This is in line with the Department of Education updates regarding the safe return to school.

6.3 Further Education and Training

Re-opening of FET

- Following a Stakeholders meeting on 10 March, it was agreed that learners at levels 4, 5 and 6 who are engaged in time-critical practical elements across the awards including QQI, City of Guilds, Junior and Senior Trade examinations would commence returning to FET centres and colleges on 15 March as part of the agreed process for a phased re-opening.
- Those learners applying for progression options through the CAO and UCAS have been deemed a priority with other learners deferred to a later date for onsite activity. Youthreach learners completing Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied have also returned.
- Vulnerable learners requiring onsite presence to support wellbeing or access to workspace and Wi-Fi to complete course work can also be accommodated. Onsite access for vulnerable learners at Level 1 and 2 on Specific Skills Training Programmes and with the National Learning Network recommenced on 22 March.
- Health and Safety Consultant visited all centres in the last 3 weeks regarding preparation for re-opening. Signage has been updated in all centres. A briefing session for co-ordinators and managers was also held regarding re-opening and general health and safety.

Governance and Management

SOLAS Funding Model: Following an Expression of Interest process KCETB has been selected to be one of the ETBs to pilot the new SOLAS FET funding model. The new model being implemented under the FET Strategy is:

- Strategically focused
- Learner centered
- Aims to redress inequalities across ETBs
- Data driven
- Tiered

TOBAR - A Recognition of Prior Learning Pilot Project (RPL) - This evaluation report considers the lessons from TOBAR, an RPL pilot project delivered in 10 (ETBs) in partnership with the Defence Forces during 2018 and 2019. In TOBAR, each ETB worked with a cohort of up to ten soldiers who prepared an RPL portfolio for identified FET awards. The evaluation demonstrated that offering RPL opportunities to individuals and groups can achieve inclusion, skills development and build pathways into further education, training and employment. KCETB had learners who presented for 41 minor awards and 4 major awards.

Other Projects

Irish Hotels Federation Roadshow (IHF)- The IHF held a roadshow on 9 March last with KCETB and the South East Regional Skills Forum. The briefing was aimed at promoting new FET Hospitality and Tourism programmes. The QQI and City and Guilds programmes will assist the hospitality sector to retain and upskill staff following the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic. Many local hoteliers and restaurant owners attended.

Music Generation Kilkenny featured two items in the virtual St Patrick's Day Parade. One workshop was with the uilleann pipes where 12 young pipers from Music Generation with their master piper tutors performed. The second was a drumming piece from Rithim Glasa composed and performed by our music educators.

6.4 Organisational Support and Development

Human Resources

Payroll Shared Services Project

The Payroll Shared Services Project is progressing as scheduled for transition in May 2021. Training of Human Resources and Payroll staff on the new system is currently taking place.

Recruitment

Planning in respect of teacher recruitment for the 2021/22 academic year has commenced. Training for recruitment boards will be scheduled in advance of the start of the recruitment process for 2021/22.

Corporate Services

No leases to be renewed at present

Capital Projects

1. **Grennan College, Thomastown** - Work on the new school extension is progressing and is to be completed by February 2022.
2. **Borris Vocational School** -The extension is due to be completed and handed over to the school in mid- March 2021.
3. **Kilkenny Schools Campus** - KCETB and Kilkenny based schools have made submissions, on the need for appropriate recreational facilities in the Western Environs, to the County Development Plan review.
4. **Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach** - Sanction has been requested for additional accommodation
5. **Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown** -Discussion in respect of additional accommodation is ongoing.
6. **COVID-19 Minor Works** - The NDFA and PPP are discussing the provision of an astro-turf pitch at Tyndall College.
7. **KCETB Capital Project Management Services**
 - a. Work on the refurbishment of Jonah Special School is progressing and scheduled for completion in August 2021.
 - b. Scoil Mhuire, Mooncoin National School; appointment of design team
 - c. Castlecomer Community College; appointment of design team
8. **Office Infrastructure** - A HQ Working Group has been established to examine the provision of a new Corporate HQ in Carlow.

Finance

The income and expenditure reports for January and February 2021 were presented.

EFT Banking Facilities

Approval from the board is sought for the continuation of the Electronic Fund Transmission (EFT) facility from Bank of Ireland in the amount of €4,657,000 until March 2022.

7. Annual Financial Statements

Adoption of Financial Statement

A meeting of the Finance Committee took place on the 22 March 2021 and the Audit and Risk Committee met on 18 March 2021 and considered the Draft Annual financial Statements for the 12-month period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

The committees' recommended that KCETB Financial Statements 2020 be adopted by the Board and signed by the Chair.

The committees also reviewed internal control procedures and the assurances of the chief executive, full reports from the committees are detailed in section 9 (c) and (d) Below

Head of Finance Linda O'Brien gave a description of the Annual Financial Statements and provided clarification in areas as required. The Annual Financial Statements and accompanying documents were proposed by Mary Hilda Cavanagh seconded by Ger Frisby and agreed.

8. Risk Management

KCETB Business Continuity and Response Plans

- a. Frontline staff are working in the workplace with other staff working remotely and granted access to the workplace when the service requires their physical presence.
- b. Risk assessments have been carried out at all locations and response plans are monitored on an ongoing basis.

Audit and Risk Committee

- a. The Committee met on 22 February 2021 and 18 March 2021 and the agenda included consideration of the system on internal control.
- b. The Committee is scheduled to present its Annual Report and determination on the system of Internal Control to the March meetings of the Finance Committee and Board.

Finance Committee

- a. The Committee met on 16 February 2021 and 22 March 2021 and the agenda included consideration of the Statement of Internal Control and the Annual Financial Statements 2020.

Risk Registers

- a. A Covid-19 Register is operational to complement the Risk Register during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- b. The Audit and Risk Committee has agreed to review the Risk Management Framework, including the operation of Risk Registers, in 2021.

Policy Management

- a. KCETB has commenced the production of a Policy Compliance Framework which will include:
 - Policy Compliance Management Plan

- Policy Schedule
 - Policy Development Schedule
- b. The board is asked to note the following amended policies which are presented today:
- Approved Medium for Storing- Sharing files
 - AUP-Email
 - Password Policy
 - KCETB Staff-Student Leaving Policy
 - Internet-Intranet Policy
 - Technology AUP Policy
 - ICT Equipment Lending Policy

LTI Audits

- a. The IAU – ETBI are concluding an audit on Service Level Agreements for Local Training Initiatives.

ESF Verification Audits

- a. Two ESF Verification Audits that focus on the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) for the years 2017 and 2019 have been submitted.

External Audit 2021

- a. The C&AG has advised that the audit on the AFS 2020 will be conducted from late July to September 2021.

Governance and Management

Service Plan 2021

The Service Plan was submitted before deadline date to the Department of Education.

Protected Disclosures Act 2014

KCETB did not receive any Protected Disclosure in 2020.

9. (a) Minutes and reports of Committees and Boards of Management

Minutes of Boards of Management and committees were noted and confirmed as appropriate by the Board.

9. (b) Report from ETBI Reserve Forum

Ger Frisby provided a report from the latest meeting of the ETBI Reserve Forum

9. (c) Report from Finance Committee

Annual Report to the Board of the Finance Committee of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB 2020

This report is submitted to the Board of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs 2019 and its own Terms of Reference.

Finance Committee 2020
Mary Brennan – external member
Sadie Aherne – external member
Edward Holohan – external member (Chair)
Peter Cleere – Board member
Deirdre Cullen – Board member
Mary Hilda Cavanagh – Board member

The Finance Committee met on four occasions in 2020;

- I. 11 February 2020
- II. 18 March 2020
- III. 10 November 2020
- IV. 15 December 2020

The committee also met on 17 February 2021 and 22 March 2021 to consider activities from the 2020 reporting period.

The Finance Committee regularly reviewed;

1. Capital Project reports
2. Contracts in excess of €50,000
3. The Contracts Register
4. Monthly Income & Expenditure reports
5. Risk Management reports

The Chief Executive, Director of Organisation Support and Development, Head of Finance and Compliance Officer all attended meetings throughout the year.

Service Plan 2021

The Draft Service Plan 2021 was presented to the Finance Committee on the 17 February 2021. On the recommendation of the committee the Board of KCETB adopted the Service Plan 2021 and submitted the plan to the Department of Education prior to 1 March.

Annual Financial Statements

At its meeting on 22 March 2020 the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 were presented in detail to the Finance Committee, for recommendation to the Board for adoption. As part of this process the committee also reviewed:

1. The summary report of the Audit and Risk Committee to the Board to ascertain that KCETB has an adequate system of Internal Control
2. Proposed Statement of Internal Control (SIC) for inclusion in the financial statements
3. The Letter of Representation to accompany presentation of the financial statements to the C&AG
4. Assurances of the Chief Executive

The Finance Committee recommended that the accounts and all associated documents, as presented by the Chief Executive, be adopted by the Board of KCETB and signed by the Chairperson.

The Finance committee deferred the review of its own effectiveness as required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs 2019 until November 2020. This was as a result of the delay to meetings following COVID-19 restrictions. A questionnaire was circulated to members prior to the meeting to reflect on the effectiveness on the Finance Committee. The review was conducted through the Chair, the overlap of some of the Audit and Risk Committee was noted. The annual review of effectiveness concluded that the Finance Committee was operating adequately and no deficiencies were noted.

The Chair of the Board will work with the Chair of the Committee to assess the committees ongoing effectiveness and requirements.

Signed: Edward Holohan
Chairperson

Date: 22/03/2021

9. (d) Report from Audit and Risk Committee

Annual Report to the Board of the Audit and Risk Committee of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB 2020

This report is presented in accordance with section 7.37 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs 2019.

Members of the Audit and Risk Committee 2020

Mary Brennan (Chairperson) – external member

PJ Leonard – External member

Ger Mulvey – External member

Patrick O’Neill – Board member

Michael Delaney – Board member

Denis Hynes – Board member (until December 2020)

Andrea Dalton – Board member (since December 2020)

The Audit and Risk Committee met on the following occasions in 2020;

- i. 27 January 2020
- ii. 13 March 2020
- iii. 12 October 2020
- iv. 2 November 2020
- v. 21 December 2020

Further meetings, reflecting on activities from the 2020 reporting period, took place on 25 January 2021 and 22 February 2021.

The Terms of Reference of KCETB’s Audit and Risk Committee provides for a report to the Board timed to support the finalisation of KCETB’s financial statements and includes:

1. Internal audit reports
2. Management representations received
3. Review of minute books of Board and Finance committee
4. Review of Audit Register
5. Correspondence and engagement with internal and external auditors
6. Other matters the committee feel prudent to report

1. Internal Audit Reports

The committee received the following internal audit reports from the IAU-ETBs during 2020

- 1) Review of Previous Audit Recommendations

The scope of the internal audit was to test and opine on the management responses given in relation to previous audit recommendations made by the IAU – ETBs in KCETB. The testing carried out on the implementation of the recommendations was on information from 1st January 2018 – 30th June 2019. The scope of the audit included the following audits:

1. ETB Office Receipts, PLC Receipts and Night Classes Receipts – February 2015
2. Community Education – February 2016
3. Adult Literacy – February 2016
4. Teacher Allocation and Co-operation hours allocated to KCETB – May 2017
5. Youthreach – April 2019

The audit fieldwork took place in KCETB in September 2019 by the IAU- ETBs. Based on the results of the audit testing the system for overseeing and implementing recommendations made in prior internal audit reports in KCETB is deemed adequate.

2. Management Representations received

A number of staff engaged with the Audit and Risk Committee during the year including; Chief Executive, Director of OSD, Director of Schools, Director of FET, Adult Education Officer, Head of Finance, Head of Human Resources, Head of Corporate Services and Compliance Officer.

Annual confirmations were received from the Chief Executive confirming that internal controls are in place in KCETB and are implemented.

Management representations in KCETB are supported by the Assurance Declarations process established across the organisation.

3. Review of minute books of the Board and Finance Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the minute books of the Board and Finance Committee and have no inconsistencies to report.

4. Review of Audit Register

The committee were presented with both the internal and external Audit Registers for consideration, as part of the committees work programme. The Audit Registers details auditor recommendations and the current status of the implementation of the recommendations. Senior members of management attended this meeting to add additional information and clarity where appropriate.

The committee was pleased to see progress on the implementation of auditor recommendations and the associated risks are reflected appropriately on the relevant risk registers.

Following the process of previous years, a number of points on the Audit Register were archived with the agreement of the committee, on the basis that the recommendation was no longer relevant and/or that the recommendation was implemented and effective. However as an additional measure, archived items will be periodically examined to ensure that the correct measures are still in place.

5. Correspondence and engagement with internal and external auditors

The Audit and Risk Committee of KCETB maintains an active and appropriate level of engagement with the IAU-ETBs and C&AG.

In November 2020 the committee met with representatives from the C&AG via MS Teams to receive a report on the findings of the C&AG audit for 2019.

6. Protected Disclosure

There were no Protected Disclosures received in 2020.

7. Risk Management Framework

KCETB operates a robust and active Risk Management Framework across the organisation developed and reviewed in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs 2019.

Specific risk management activities conducted in 2020, include;

- Ongoing adherence to the Risk Management Implementation Plan, including;
 - Risk Register processes
 - Development of a COVID-19 Risk Register
 - Assurance Declarations for Directors, Schools, FET centres and programmes, OSD Senior Management
 - Establishment of Business Continuity Management Team
 - Reporting and engagement with Audit and Risk Committee, IAU-ETB and Board
 - Compliance Audit Report
 - Control Environment Oversight Report – particular emphasis on the impact of COVID-19

The Chief Risk Officer reports to the committee at every meeting, providing updates on the Risk Registers and other issues under the risk management category. The committee are satisfied that risk is managed effectively and actively in KCETB.

8. Review of its own-effectiveness

As required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs 2019, the Audit and Risk Committee formally reviewed its own effectiveness.

The Chair of the Board works with the Chair of the Committee to assess the committees ongoing effectiveness and requirements.

9. Review of policies

Throughout the year the committee reviewed, and advised on, the following policies;

- Procurement Policy Amendments
- Management Policy
- Risk Management Implementation Plan

10. Review of Annual Financial Statements

As part of the annual review and consideration of the Annual Financial Statements the committee received a detailed presentation on;

1. Draft Annual Financial Statements
2. The Statement of Internal Control
3. Letter of Representation to the C&AG
4. CE Assurance Statement
5. Assurance Declarations from Directors
6. The Impact of Covid-19 on the control environment
7. System of Control

In summary, by undertaking the activities detailed above and through discussion with the executive the Audit and Risk Committee is satisfied that KCETB has operated adequate and appropriate systems of internal control.

Signed: PJ Leonard

Date: 18/03/2021

Chairperson

10. Matters for approval or confirmation by the Board

230321 – KCETB 01 Minutes of previous meeting(s)

Adopt the recorded minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021. The minutes will be published online.

Correspondence received and noted.

230321– KCETB 02 Chief Executive's Report

For adoption/approval/noting

230321 – KCETB 03 Corporate Services

Approve leases (no leases at this meeting)

180521 – 02 – Minutes

230321 – KCETB 04 Finance including EFT Facilities

For approval

230321 – KCETB 05 Annual Financial Statements 2020 and accompanying documents including signing of the Statement of Internal Control

For adoption

230321 – KCETB 06 Risk Management

For approval/adoption/noting

230321 – KCETB 07 Report of Committees

For confirmation/ adoption – Annual Report of Audit and Risk Committee, Finance Committee

For information – BOM minutes

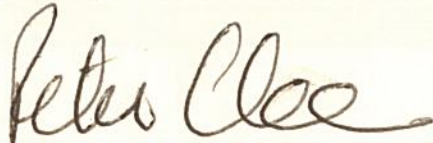
Unless stated previously the above items were adopted by the Board as proposed by Deirdre Cullen, seconded by Ger Frisby and agreed.

11. Other business with prior permission of the Chair

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 18 May at 3.30pm via MS Teams.

Signed:



Date: 18/05/21