

EXCELLENCE THROUGH
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Laoise agus Uíbh Fhailí
*Laois and Offaly
Education and Training Board*

Statement of Strategy

2023 - 2027

www.loetb.ie



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MESSAGE FROM THE CATHAOIRLEACH

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Statement of Strategy for Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB), addressing our priorities for the next five years 2023 – 2027. Building on the work of our Statement of Strategy 2018 – 2022, this comprehensive document seeks to further develop and support the transformation that has occurred over the past five years.

Looking back, it would have been impossible to predict the many events and challenges that have taken place in those five years, particularly the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effect on a global scale. As Cathaoirleach of LOETB, I am proud to say that our response to this crisis was timely and effective, with an outstanding contribution from staff across the organisation resulting in minimal disruption, with a maximum of learning remaining in place.

This Strategy Statement has been developed following a wide-ranging consultation process, coupled with the examination of key policies and legislation at local, national, and European level. This document will focus our work for the coming years, building on our achievements to date, enhancing our existing organisational structures, and provide opportunities for the organisation to keep pushing the boundaries of education provision forward, ever improving, and ever conscious of the remit we hold.

I wish to commend the Board members of LOETB, the Chief Executive, Joe Cunningham, and all our staff for their continuing hard work and their commitment to the development of this strategy. I wish all our students and staff every success as we work in partnership to achieve excellence through education and training.



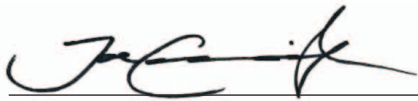
Cllr. Robert McDermotr
Cathaoirleach

FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

At LOETB, we are committed to excellence and innovation in teaching and learning and this Strategy Statement sets out the direction of our organisation over the next five years to enable us to continue to provide high quality education and training services to the communities of Laois and Offaly.

This strategy is the culmination of a wide-ranging consultation process, and I am confident that it addresses current concerns and ambitions while simultaneously taking cognisance of trends and developments at local, national, and European level. The strategy sets out four goals with a number of associated priorities. Under the leadership of the Directors of Schools, Further Education and Training, and Organisation Support and Development, the strategy will become the reference guide for the work of LOETB and there will be clear actions devised to support the achievement of the goals and priorities. The Strategy Statement will inform annual Service Plans for 2023–2027, and each year, the Annual Report will document the progress that has been made.

Building on the achievements of the previous five years, we are confident and optimistic that we can continue to build on the strengths that we have demonstrated through our successful past performance. We will meet our future challenges with renewed commitment and deliver on our mission of excellence through education and training.



Joe Cunningham
Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This LOETB Statement of Strategy sets high-level objectives under four Strategic Goals

1. Leading learning
2. Building sustainability
3. Working in partnership
4. Enhancing systems

Each goal has its own set of strategic priorities which will be met through a series of supporting actions. These goals and priorities were designed to help LOETB avail of the opportunities which will arise and meet the challenges it faces over the next five years.

GOAL 1: LEADING LEARNING

LOETB has a long history of excellence in education, with our foundations providing decades of quality education to our wider community. Reflecting on this history, LOETB wishes to position itself as a leader in education provision on a local, regional, and national basis. Whilst best practice suggests a pinnacle has been reached, leading learning suggests that LOETB has its finger on the pulse of the many aspects of education capabilities and organisational infrastructure required to lead educational provision as a service provider. In leading learning, LOETB also seeks to develop new, innovative, dynamic, agile programmes, practices, and provision that highlight and utilise innovative aspects in the delivery of education and training.

GOAL 2: BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

LOETB recognises that while our organisation is continually improving how we operate, there is also a requirement on us to undertake our business ethically without negatively impacting the environment, community, or society. To improve how we operate as a sustainable business, LOETB is planning a series of initiatives to minimise the effect our business has on the environment and on the community. Sustainability provides us with an opportunity to reflect, research, react and realign the when, why, where, and how we conduct our business. It provides a valuable springboard for improvement in operations while concomitantly providing new opportunities in teaching and learning in the migration from a fossil fuel past.

GOAL 3: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

There are many proven benefits from working in partnership, and one of the key partnerships that LOETB can be justifiably proud of is the learning partnership that occurs between each individual student, learner and/or trainee that participate in the many programmes that we offer. It is our intention to enhance these learning partnerships through the continued development and building of relationships to achieve mutually expected outcomes for the learner. Additionally, our experience has shown us that organisational partnership provide many rich opportunities for research, efficiencies, business transformation, staff development, and organisational transformation. Through key stakeholder engagement, LOETB wishes to leverage the power of partnership to transform the organisation, building sustainable working relationships and partnerships which enhances the organisations capabilities to meet and exceed expected outcomes in service delivery.

GOAL 4: ENHANCING SYSTEMS

LOETB will lead high-quality education and training by being innovative, dynamic, progressive, and providing best practice support systems in finance, human resources, corporate services, administration, and governance. A robust culture of integrity and ethics will be supported through effective administrative structures, a strong corporate identity and compliance, built around our core values. A governance and support framework which will assist with the efficient and effective delivery of LOETB's education and training services is key to our organisational development.

PROFILE OF LOETB

LOETB was established on 1 July 2013 and is the statutory provider of education and training services for Laois and Offaly. The overall aim of LOETB is to enable our students to reach their potential. We strive to offer learning experiences that respond to the needs of students of all ages and abilities. We make guidance and supports available to our students to help them attain their learning goals and qualifications. We include transfer and progression options for our students to maximise their chances of pursuing further education and training and securing employment.

We acknowledge the importance of suitable facilities and resources for our students in our commitment to inclusive education. We are mindful of our responsibilities in relation to human rights and equality, both as a service provider and employer. We understand the importance of technology to enhance learning, collaboration, and communication among our students and stakeholders. To this end, we are working to ensure our digital systems are accessible, reliable, and protected.

We aspire to continue growing as a learning organisation and ensure our staff have access to professional development opportunities. This includes enabling staff to become reflective practitioners, enhance their skills, and collaborate with colleagues. We recognise that professional development can be facilitated in a variety of ways, from accredited programmes to workshops and professional learning networks.

We appreciate that much of the work of our organisation is made possible by the support and administrative staff in our schools, centres, and services and by the key support functions at Head Office. We place an extremely high value on the contribution made by the various committees which support LOETB at organisational level and in our schools and centres. We also work in partnership with key organisations and agencies at local and national level in pursuit of a quality service for our students.

VISION AND VALUES

Our vision is to actively lead the provision of high-quality education and training in Laois and Offaly. Our mission is excellence through education and training. We put learning at the heart of everything we do through the provision of a wide range of education and training programmes, services, and supports to young people and adults across the LOETB region. We believe that lifelong learning is key to personal development and wellbeing, social inclusion, and economic prosperity. Our core values as a service provider are as follows:

Excellence in Education

The LOETB ethos establishes that excellence in education is underpinned by the core values of care, respect, community, and equality.

Care

In LOETB, care is about the welfare, wellbeing, and safety of all members of the learning community. It is exemplified in meaningful relationships, connectedness, and empathy, alongside support and solidarity.

Community

In LOETB, community encompasses students, learners, staff, parents, and the local community. It is about having shared vision, values and purpose, a sense of belonging, and a voice that is listened to. It is exemplified in productive collaboration, positive contributions, and effective communication across all members of the learning community.

Equality

In LOETB, equality is about treating all members of the learning community equally and recognising and celebrating the diversity of these members. It is exemplified in targeting resources on those who have need and prioritising a culture of inclusion.

Respect

In LOETB, respect is about upholding the dignity, rights, and recognition of the identity and background of each member of the learning community. It is exemplified in relationships between all members of the learning community, and decision-making that impacts positively on the rights, feelings, and aspirations of the diversity of people within the school community.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

L OETB is one of the main employers in the midlands with over 1,300 staff providing education for more than 4,700 students at post-primary level and over 17,000 beneficiaries on FET programmes and services. LOETB manages nine post-primary schools and is also joint patron of five Community Schools located in Mountmellick, Ballinakill, Mountrath, Birr, and Ferbane. LOETB's FET Service operates thirteen multi-programme centres, including the National Construction Training Campus at Mount Lucas, and two Learner Information Hubs strategically located in Portlaoise and Tullamore. LOETB also has an extensive programme of Music Education provision available through Music Generation Laois, Laois School of Music, Music Generation Offaly, and the Academy of Music, Tullamore. Under the Education & Training Board Act 2013, LOETB has a responsibility to support the provision, coordination, administration, and assessment of youth work services in its functional area and, through co-operation with other institutions, provide support to a wide variety of programmes and agencies to deliver education and training programmes that cannot be met by mainstream educational services in counties Laois and Offaly.

LOETB has a long history of working in partnership with various statutory, community and voluntary groups. Management and staff of LOETB are represented on various boards and committees across the two counties of Laois and Offaly. This partnership approach provides opportunities for the various groups and organisations to share information about services and to work together to identify gaps in provision locally and provide additional services where necessary.

Governance Framework

LOETB is governed by a Board comprising 21 members. This includes 12 representatives from the local authorities of Laois and Offaly, six from each council; two members elected from staff; two parent representatives; and five members with a specialist knowledge including a learner representative and an educational management representative.

ORGANISATION CONTEXT

In setting out our strategy for the next five years, we have considered the impact of recent changes for our future. We have also looked at the changes in government policy that will influence our work in the coming years:

- The global pandemic, Covid-19, has created an extraordinary environment over the past two years. It is also likely to have longer-term effects, for example on government finances, changing ways of working, increasing the demand for upskilling, and reskilling to meet the needs of the changing economy.
- Brexit will have implications for the development and delivering of cross-border education and training responses, particularly in the construction and sustainability sectors.
- Government policy on education and training is undergoing significant change, which will affect our work over the coming years. We aim to incorporate the relevant aspects of the following policy developments into our strategy for 2022–2026:
 - The Department of Education Strategy Statement 2021–2023.
 - The new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Strategy for 2021–2023
 - The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) review of Senior Cycle education
 - The Further Education and Training strategy, Future FET: Transforming Learning (2020–2024)
 - Adult Literacy for Life (ALL): A 10 Year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy
 - Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025
 - The Government’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021 includes the theme of “Advancing the Green Transition”
- The establishment of two Technological Universities (TUS and SETU) will allow LOETB to further develop progression pathways for students to higher level and well as collaborate on the co-development and co-delivery of programmes leading to Level 8 Awards.

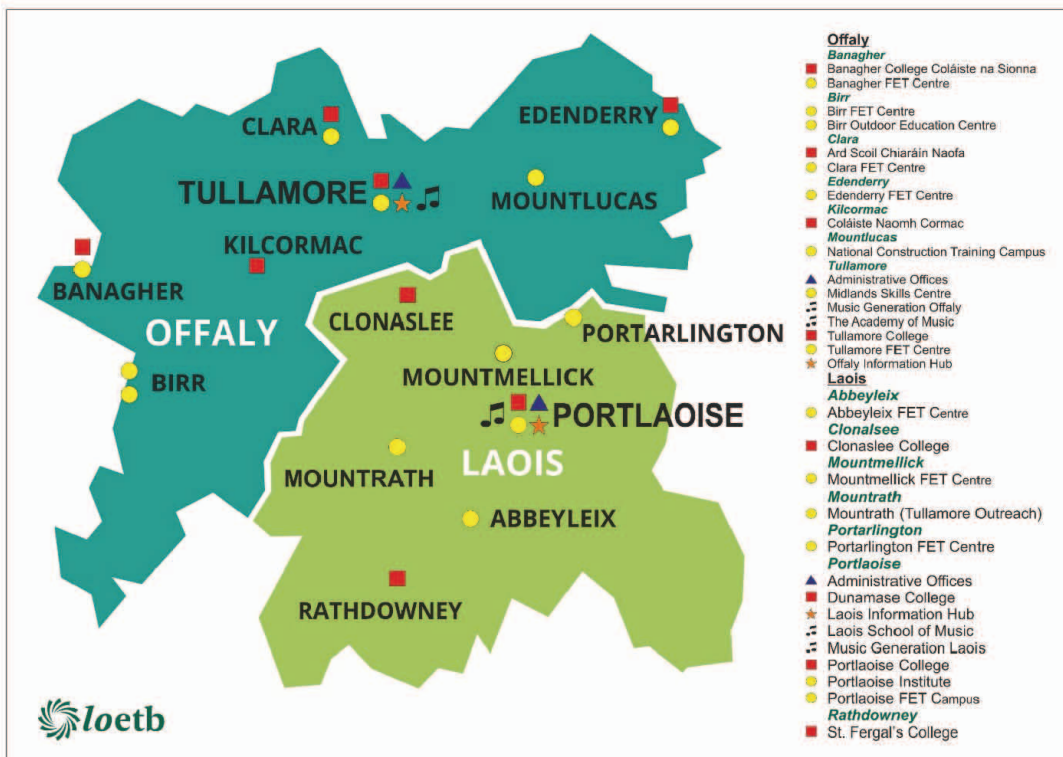
Technological Developments

Advances in information and communications technology continue to have a significant impact on education, training, and administration. The provision of more capable and robust Wi-Fi infrastructure, and 5G communications, has opened more options around blended and remote learning. The availability and potential of such technologies became even more critical during the Covid-19 pandemic, when our schools and centres migrated to remote learning to maximise the student learning experience. Students, learners, teachers, tutors, and our administration offices ensured continuity of service provision via the investment of the development skills in this area. We recognise that now is the opportune time to capitalise on the possibilities provided by that expedited and necessary learning that occurred, and to continue to support technological developments that enhance the services we provide. It is for this reason that we are particularly cognisant of the “Digital

Strategy for Schools to 2027” (Dept. Of Education), and the “FET Professional Learning & Development: Statement of Strategy 2020 – 2024” (SOLAS).

The Regional Perspective

Laois and Offaly is a predominantly rural area of approximately 3,715km², with a population of 174,325 people (Census 2022) stretching from Banagher on the banks of the Shannon to the River Barrow on the edge of Carlow town. The most recent CSO figures indicate that the population of the region has grown by 7.17%, with Offaly growing by 6.03% since 2016, while Laois has had an 8.23% growth in population. The role of LOETB as a key stakeholder in the delivery of the Just Transition initiative. Given the closure of two peat-fired power station in Shannonbridge and Lanesborough, the Government has initiated a programme of interventions and supports to mitigate the effects of the closure, recommending actions to ensure a just transition to a socio-economic, environmental, and sustainable future. LOETB is justifiably proud of its involvement in this critical initiative.



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

This Statement of Strategy is the result of a consultation process starting in early 2022. Consultation consisted of questionnaires, meetings and focus groups involving managers, programme and centre co-ordinators, staff, schools, school boards of management, support, and development teams from across the organisation, and the Board of LOETB. Consultation with education partners and other stakeholders was a key element of the process, from which several strategic goals and priorities emerged.

Task	Timescale
Preliminary meetings and consultation	April 2022
2018 – 2022 Strategy review	April 2022
Draft framework for 2023 – 2027 Strategy	April 2022
Initial consultation with senior managers	April 2022
Initial consultation with middle-managers and coordinators	May 2022
Survey of Staff, Board, Committees, and BOMs	May 2022
Survey of school students and FET learners	June 2022
Survey of stakeholders	June 2022
Collation and interpretation of survey results	August 2022
Finalising of the Strategy	September 2022
Approval by LOETB Board	November 2022
Launch	January 2023

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The Statement of Strategy 2023–2027 establishes high-level priorities for the organisation under four strategic goals:

LEADING LEARNING

LOETB wishes to position itself as a leader in education provision on a local, regional, and national basis.

- Ensure that excellence in education continues to be delivered through prioritising the highest standards of learning, teaching and assessment across all our schools, centres and programmes.
- Ensure that all schools and centres provide education programmes which enhance learning experiences to meet the needs of all students.
- Create a positive and supportive work environment that supports the wellbeing of staff in our schools/centres and offices.
- Provide appropriate fora supporting staff to share best practice in all our schools and centres
- Ensure staff have access to the most up to date and relevant Professional Development opportunities (prioritising these with financial support for all staff).
- Support and promote a culture where Young People (in particular, those who are vulnerable, marginalised and at risk) will have a voice in decision-making in youth service provision, training, education, and the wider formal and non-formal education systems.
- Attract and retain a high quality and skilled staff.
- Ensure the health and safety of all students/learners and staff.
- Compliance with regulations and guidelines.

BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

LOETB will act in a way that is consistent with a sustainable future and Ireland's 2021 Climate Action Plan.

- Develop a Sustainability Forum with representation from each facility that introduced measure to reduce the costs associated with resource usage such as energy, water, and waste, and to reduce and better manage the institution's GHG footprint.
- Ensure current and proposed buildings are up to current and potential future sustainability requirements.
- Increase environmental sustainability across the organisation through green procurement and paperless offices.

- Ensure climate action plans 2021 and 2030 are embedded in our practices.
- Psychosocial risks and dealing with same.
- Actively promotes and commits to sustainability through our education programmes, processes, and policies.
- Provide professional learning opportunities to support all members of the school community in delivering the highest professional standards.
- Provide staff, learners and communities with the awareness and skills to actively support sustainability in the region.
- Provide learners with the skills to attain meaningful employment in a thriving green economy.
- Support employers to transition the Midlands to a Green and Digital regional economy.
- Lead the sector in developing green skills for Life, Careers and Construction.
- Deliver Youth Work in line with Government strategy and community needs through the provision, coordination, administration, and assessment of youth services in Laois and Offaly.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

LOETB will develop new and enhance existing partnerships with relevant stakeholders at local, community, national and international level to optimize our capacity to meet the education, training and youth work needs of Laois and Offaly.

- Actively contribute at national fora as required.
- Collaborate with other ETBs, ETBI, Government bodies and statutory agencies in developing responses to the emerging challenges in education and training.
- Assist the DoE as needed, to meet the needs arising from the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and provision for international protection applicants.
- Support partnerships and effective communication among staff in ETB offices, schools, and centres, to build a strong team culture.
- Deliver real-time data to managers (principals, centre managers) to support their decision making and compliance.
- Improve internal and external communication with all stakeholders through a variety of media.
- Developing education learning partnerships on an international basis.
- Actively prioritise building and maintaining relationships with our key internal and external stakeholders.
- Prioritise fostering and developing collaborative opportunities that support school development.
- Continue to act as a lead proponent of partnership in our region.
- Enhance our innovative and inclusive approach to sectoral programme development.
- Utilising the partnership approach to establish sustainable pathways for learners.
- Develop networks which enable information sharing, collaboration between the non-formal education

sector, family support services and youth services to bring about better use of existing resources, practices, and initiatives, to better support creativity for Young People in Laois and Offaly.

ENHANCING SYSTEMS

LOETB will provide a governance and framework structure which facilitates the efficient and effective delivery of its education and training services and to ensure the highest standards of accountability, compliance, and transparency.

- Establishing LOETB as an employer of choice.
- Meet expected targets in the recruitment of staff with required levels of skills in the Irish language and languages of the local community.
- Be change leaders and encourage an organisational culture where change is welcomed.
- Continue to develop our capacity to use the Irish language across the organisation.
- Further develop ICT infrastructure to support shared services systems, data protection systems and business continuity.
- Develop appropriate management information and reporting systems across the organisation.
- Ensure the highest standards of financial and risk management to supports schools and centres to operate within funding and corporate governance requirements.
- Introduce structures to meet evolving work patterns.
- Develop an excellence in Lean management principles, to improve resources management
- Focus on delivering excellent customer service, streamline communications and response timelines.
- Develop organisational wellbeing to ensure staff are supported in their work
- Work with employees to develop and build staff competencies through a targeted guidance system for OSD staff.
- Ensure equality and human rights is at the heart of everything we do.
- Respond to changes and developments in education to ensure that innovative systems are in place which support the delivery of high-quality education experiences for all students in our schools and centres.
- Support schools and centres in managing all resources necessary to continue to provide high quality education and training.
- Continue to improve infrastructure and use the most modern methods of delivery to enhance the teaching and learning environment.
- Continue to build LOETB brand awareness and improve internal and external communications.
- Develop a five-year Youth Work Plan that is informed by young people and key stakeholders.
- Conduct an area profile needs analysis to identify emerging needs and gaps in youth service provision, to better support evidence-based applications for new and expanded youth service funding opportunities.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Senior Management Team (Chief Executive and Directors) will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the strategy statement. Each year, the Service Plan will identify actions to address priorities under the four goals and the Annual Report will provide an update on the progress of strategy implementation.

GLOSSARY

AONTAS	National Adult Learning Organisation
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
BOM	Board of Management
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CABWI	Certification and Assessment Board
COP	Communities of Practice
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPOR	Child Protection Oversight Report
CPP	Corporate Procurement Plan
CPSI	Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections
DE	Department of Education
DEIS	Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools
DLP	Designated Liaison Person
DPO	Data Protection Officer
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
ESBS	Education Shared Business Services
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETB	Education and Training Board
FC	Finance Committee
FET	Further Education and Training
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPA	Institute of Public Administration
IAU	Internal Audit Unit
LAOS	Looking At Our School
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LTI	Local Training Initiative
MAED	Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OSD	Organisation Support and Development
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
QA	Quality Assurance
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SIPO	Standards in Public Office Commission
SNU	Special Needs Unit
SSE	School Self-Evaluation
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
VTCT	Vocational Training Charitable Trust
WSE-MLL	Whole School Evaluation - Management, Leadership, and Learning

STATEMENT OF STRATEGY 2023 - 2027



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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