



A meeting of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board was held on Tuesday 23 January 2024 at Banagher College - Coláiste Na Sionna, Banagher, Co Offaly.

Present

Evelyn Dunne (Chairperson)
Ms Molly Buckley
Cllr John Carroll
Cllr Clare Claffey
Mr Jim Cashen
Mr Dave Cullen
Cllr Neil Feighery
Cllr Caroline Dwane-Stanley
Mr Shane Flesk
Cllr Robert Mc Dermott
Mr Frank Smith
Mr Niall Tully
Cllr Barry Walsh
Cllr Pdraig Fleming

In Attendance

Mr Joe Cunningham, Chief Executive
Ms Marie Bracken, Director of OSD
Ms Josie Lalor, Corporate Services

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms Maura Brophy, Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick, Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald, Cllr Frank Moran.

2. Youth Work Plan 2023-2027

The Youth Work Plan for 2023-2027 was presented by Linda Tynan (Director of Schools), Joe Thompson (Youth Development Officer), and Ailbhe Enraght-Moony (Resource Worker).

The Youth Development Officer informed the committee that the DCEDIY (Youth Affairs) were allocated an additional €5 million in Budget 2024.

The presentation highlighted the role LOETB has in supporting the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional area and the purpose of the Youth Work Committee. The demographics of the high youth population was presented in relation to the level of funding received by LOETB which has been consistently



the lowest of all 16 ETBs. The distribution of 2023 funding across both Laois and Offaly was explained as was the breakdown by grant/fund.

The needs of young people were highlighted, and the strategic goals and priorities of the new Youth Work Plan were outlined. The board members were informed of the actions being taken to advocate for enhanced youth services in Laois and Offaly and the areas in which they may best lend their support.

The Chairperson and members thanked the Youth Services team for developing a comprehensive Youthwork Plan and approved same.

Proposed: John Carroll

Seconded: Molly Buckley

3. Minutes of Board Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on 28 November 2023, were circulated to members. Members approved the minutes, and they were signed by the Chairperson.

Proposed: Molly Buckley

Seconded: John Carroll

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. Governance

Update from Critical Systems Oversight Committee:

Corporate Risk Register:

Marie Bracken informed the members that the Critical Systems Oversight Committee met in November 2023. There are currently 19 risks identified on the Risk Register. In addition, the committee made two alterations, removed two risks, and added two new risks to the Risk Register. Ms Bracken also informed the members that the Corporate Risk Register had been uploaded to the Board SharePoint for information purposes.



Declaration of Interest

As per Schedule 3, Paragraph 10, Section 3 of the (ETB) Act 2013 and the Agenda Notice, no conflicts of interest were declared.



6. Correspondence

Item No.	Correspondence From	Date / Ref No.	Details	Comments
1.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0059.2023	Domestic Violence Leave for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools	Noted by Members
2.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0060.2023	Domestic Violence Leave for Special Needs Assistant employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools	Noted by Members
3.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0061.2023	Arrangements for the Election of Staff to the Board of DDLETB	Noted by Members
4.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0062.2023	Payment of Tool Allowance to Craft Workers -2023	Noted by Members
5.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0063.2023	Domestic Violence Leave for staff other than persons employed as Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in Education and Training Boards	Noted by Members
7.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0064.2023	Revised Domestic Subsistence Allowances effective from 14th December 2023 payable to Staff in Education and Training Boards (ETBs)and Members of ETBs and of ETB Statutory Committees	Noted by Members
8.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0001.2024	Cost of living measure to support increased school running costs in 2024	Noted by Members



9.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0004.2024	Extension to the Waiver of Abatement of Public Sector Pensions under Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012	Noted by Members
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7. Draft Policies

The following draft policies were circulated and shared on SharePoint to members prior to the meeting.

- Gifts Policy
- Hospitality & Entertainment Policy
- Lease of Property (inwards – outwards)
- Property Acquisition and Disposal of Surplus Property Policy

Proposed: John Carroll

Seconded: Neil Feighery

8. Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG)

Audit Certificate

Marie Bracken discussed the Certificate received from OCAG and referred to the following extract from the Certificate:

- 'the financial statements properly present the income and expenditure of the Board for 2021 and the state of affairs of the Board at 31 December 2022', an
- 'the financial statements are in accordance with the accounting policies laid down by the Minister for Education.

9. Minutes of Committees of the Board

The following minutes were circulated to members prior to the meeting for noting.

- Finance Committee 8 September 2023
- Audit and Risk Committee 8 September 2023
- Banagher College 14 June 2023
- Banagher College 27 September 2023
- Clonaslee College 28 September 2023
- Oaklands College 25 September 2023

10. Parent Nomination to the Board

Orla Doyle was nominated to replace Mary Cotter Bracken as the parent representative on the LOETB Board following a selection process by the National Parents' Council.

Proposed: Pdraig Fleming

Seconded: Molly Buckley



11. Board of Management Nomination

Clonaslee College:

Parent Representative – Becky Dunne

Proposed: Molly Buckley

Seconded: Niall Tully

12. Chief Executive's Report

Schools Directorate

Schools

SEN Provision Mapping

The Community of Practice for Schools new to Provision Mapping facilitated by LOETB Inclusion Co-Ordinator Josephine Moore will take place on 23 January 2024.

Ethos

The second online teacher training day for the Implementation of Identity Multi-values and Beliefs Education (Patron's Curriculum) will take place on 6 February 2024.

Leadership Webinar Series

LOETB/Laois Education Centre Leadership in Practice webinar series for aspiring and current middle leaders held Session 2, Day to Day Practicalities of the Assistant Principal I and II role, on 6 December. Session 3 The Role of the Year Head is scheduled for 19 March 2024. This series of webinars is open to all current middle leaders and aspiring leaders in LOETB schools.

SNA Training

LOETB/Laois Education Centre held two webinars for SNA staff focusing on ICT skills. Two sessions were offered, Basic ICT skills and Advanced ICT skills. The online webinars took place on 23 November and 7 December with Angela Costello (SETU).

ETB Junior Maths Competition

The first stage of the inter-ETB Junior Maths Competition (a collaboration between LOETB, CMETB and LWETB) took place on the 11 December 2023. 35 teams from the 9 LOETB Post-Primary Schools competed in the LOETB Junior Maths Competition in the Midlands Park Hotel. The top five teams from each ETB competition progressed to the Inter-ETB final to be held in Bloomfield House Hotel on 16 Tuesday. Congratulations to Tullamore College,



Portlaoise College, Oaklands Community College (2 teams), and Clonaslee College who will represent LOETB at the final.

STEAM Programme

This partnership with Offaly and Laois County Councils continues to the next stage. Following the launch at the Information Hub in Tullamore on 16 November, the programme has continued with the training of teachers, in parallel to providing schools with the necessary equipment to participate.

All nine LOETB schools, covering over 300 students, are involved in the programme, which seeks to develop 21st century skills in several areas of digital technology. The four strands of the programme (Vex Robotics, Lego League Coding, Minecraft Design and Podcasting) will culminate with two showcase events: the final of the Lego League at Tullamore Information Hub on 22 February and the overall STEAM Programme Showcase event at Portlaoise College on 11 April.

Youth Services

UBU Your Place Your Space

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) has carried out a review of UBU Your Place Your Space scheme applications and recommendations submitted by the LOETB Coordination Group.

Integration Grant 2024

LOETB made a submission to DCEDIY for increased integration funding for 2024 of €60,000, over and above the 2023 allocated amount of €26,000 in 2023. A total fund of €86,000 would provide much needed supports for both part-time Integration workers across both counties and programmes to significantly enhance current limited youth service providers resources.

Local Creative Youth Partnerships

In 2023 Laois and Offaly Local Creative Youth Partnership supported a total of 45 creative youth projects, programmes, and events across Laois and Offaly in non-formal education settings.

Music Generation

Music Generation Laois: Christmas Performances 2023

A series of Christmas performances took place in Laois Music Centre, featuring young musicians from Music Generation Laois and Laois School of Music in December 2023.



Festival of Youth Orchestras

The Music Generation Laois Trad Orchestra will perform excerpts of 'The Impossible Dream' and the Music Generation Laois Trad Orchestra at this year's Irish Association of Youth Orchestras Annual Festival at the National Concert Hall on 10 February.

Music Generation Offaly

The "We are Music Generation" celebrations coincide with 10 years of Music Generation in Offaly and funding has been secured from the Music Generation National Development Office to assist in our celebrations across Offaly.

Music Generation Offaly will have new outreach programmes in 2 community centres in Clonfanlough and Belmont delivering after-school music lessons.

The Piperlink Uilleann Pipe programme

This programme has returned to Croghan Community centre, with further planning to expand into local primary schools.

REALT

Rathdowney Modular Homes: 44 families moved in on 11 December 2023 with 78 requiring school places. 42 Primary pupils have been accommodated and all post-primary students have secured schooling, with an additional 8 pupils looking for places.

Tullamore Modular Homes: 64 families moved into these homes between 28 and 29 November 2023, with 113 requiring school places. Currently, 30 post-primary students 60 Primary pupils have been enrolled in schools. Some older students have opted for online Ukraine schooling. Some bus routes have commenced but work is ongoing on others.

Banagher: The first phase is complete with 22 residents. The second phase will be ready in two weeks and will accommodate 80 people.

Edenderry: Accommodation is ready for 23 people with another facility to accommodate 55 residents being refurbished.

FET Directorate

Tertiary Project

The two new tertiary programmes in Portlaoise Institute are progressing very well, with students on both the Business Studies and the Software Development programmes having completed Semester 1 exams in December. Exam Board meetings take place on 24 January.



Retention on these programmes has been excellent (93% so far), and we are confident that the majority of students will progress to their second year of the programme, either in Portlaoise Institute or SETU (Carlow) with both options available to students.

Course	Average Age	% Male/Female
B.Sc. in Software Development	24.5	87% male, 13% female
Bachelor of Business Studies	23.5	43% male, 57% female

Entrepreneurship

New Beginnings is an employed traineeship with Bord Na Mona facilitating a Start Your Own Business Programme as a redeployment option. The programme was delivered over 20 weeks and incorporated QQI Level 5 modules in Start Your Own Business and Work Practice, Lean Yellow Belt, and expert advice in Taxation, Business Accounts and Marketing.

The aim of the course was to create a culture of entrepreneurship. The programme has been very successful with 10 participants from the programme setting up in their business across a number of different sectors (e.g. SOLAR PV, Retrofitting, Fabrication, Health and Safety training, Delivery Driver, Home Renovations and Tyre Centre).

Quality & IR Implementation

LOETB has awarded the tender for a new corporate website to a new provider. Work will commence immediately to continue to connect with our target audience while reflecting the most up-to-date information regarding our organisation - who we are and what we offer.

The LOETB SharePoint site will go to tender in February for the development of a new SharePoint for the organisation - it is envisaged that it will be completed by Q3. As part of the new SharePoint installation, the following areas will be the focus:

- Departmental document management solution.
- Intranet
- Web Portals for the different Governance Structures
- Corporate Calendar Capability
- Document approval Workflow
- Forms and survey delivery
- LOETB Staff profile update (Delve)

National Construction Training Campus

- OCO Global Meet The Buyer event happening in Mount Lucas on Friday 9 February.
- NZEB & Retrofit throughput for 2023 was 2083 equating to 50% of the national total.



- The Mobile rig is on a 3-week stay in Buncrana, Co Donegal (Inishowen Peninsula) training schools and local community groups.
- The first four Scaffolding Apprenticeship groups will complete their programme in Q1.
- Uisce Eireann plan to train 500 Site Supervisors in 2024 at Mount Lucas because of the success of the Utilities Traineeship programme.
- Mount Lucas, in collaboration with St Andrew's Resource Centre in Dublin, recently celebrated its 1,000th graduate of the Level 3 Construction Skills programme.
- In 2024 Mount Lucas will expand its provision at St Andrew's, with additional courses in QQI Level 5 Retrofit Insulation Skills which will provide a pathway for learners that have completed the Level 3 and level 4 programmes. Over 1,000 learners will complete construction-related training in 2024, with a focus on NZEB and Retrofitting.

Apprenticeship

- A partnership with the ESB has been re-established with plans in place to run Phase 2 electrical apprenticeships at the ESB Training Centre in Portlaoise. It is planned to recruit 4 Instructors and to have 4 classes of 12 apprentices at a time on this site.
- The new workshop in Kilcruttin, Tullamore is operational. The first 24 apprentices began in December. It is planned to accommodate 60 apprentices at a time on this site.
- The workshop part of the new training facility at METAC (Mountrath) has been completed and accommodates 28 apprentices at a time.
- Recruitment for electrical Instructors is ongoing as part of the apprenticeship expansion. 7 new Instructors have joined the team between November and January this year and we have positions for 6 more.
- There are currently 731 apprentices registered from Laois & Offaly, they are registered with approximately 350 different employers across 72 approved apprenticeships. 27 of these are craft apprenticeships and the remainder are post-2016 apprenticeships including supply chain associate specialist, farm manager, sports turf management, logistics and OEM engineering (Original Equipment Manufacturing).

Inclusion

2023 saw increases in beneficiaries at the lower qualification levels, thereby providing engagement and support to those who are most disadvantaged across Laois and Offaly

- Community Education, which increased by 389.2% since 2017, had substantial growth which reflects a strong commitment to expanding educational opportunities and increasing access to FET.
- Adult Literacy has increased by 49.7% since 2021 which in 2023 is largely accounted for by our response to the Ukrainian crisis with 1165 beneficiaries attending ESOL classes. The Adult Literacy Service hosted two very successful awards ceremonies in Q4 of 2023, attended by over 330 in Laois which was a joint event with Mountmellick FET Centre and 280 in Offaly where we were joined by Clara FET Centre.



- The Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) National Programme Office has launched a media campaign promoting 'Literacy for All' with a particular focus on digital literacy, which will be supported locally through the Regional Literacy Coordinator. The Innovation and Collaboration Fund will also be launched by the NPO in the coming weeks.
- LOETB's commitment to Learner Support has been reinforced through the work of the Access Officer who is working closely with the FET Managers to develop an effective plan for 2024 around the integration of inclusive practices and 2023 saw a budget of over €300,000 dedicated to learner support.
- There is a new pilot to start in Portlaoise Prison Education Centre in February where a QQI Level 6 module 'Learning to Learn' will be delivered in conjunction with SETU (Waterford).

OSD Directorate

Human Resources

Recruitment

The following posts have been filled since the last ETB meeting

- 1 Youthreach Resource Worker
- Sub teacher panel
- PWT & 1 Acting Grade VII
- Acting APII Dunamase College
- AP1 Portlaoise College
- FET tutor panel
- Teaching posts
- Electrical instructors
- Musician Educator panel
- Grade V
- Grade VI
- Programme Coordinator St Fergal's College

The following posts have been advertised

- Grade III posts
- Grade IV posts
- Electrical instructor posts
- Sub teacher panel
- Teaching posts
- APII Clonaslee College
- SNA tutor panel



- Adult Educator

Payroll

Pay Date	Totals	Staff Paid
22/11/2023	€1,335,640.57	1073
08/12/2023	€1,387,149.99	1081
22/12/2023	€1,388,304.75	1147
05/01/2024	€1,423,566.50	1068

Finance

Budgets

All 2023 budgets are being reviewed and balanced.

Finances

Draft summary of finances to end of December 2023. [Please click here to see table below.](#)

Summary of Workings to End December 2023									
ITEM	Opening Grant Cash Balance	Adjustment to Opening Balance	Receipts	Credits Transfer	Receipt Targets	Payments	Closing Grant Cash Balance	% of Overall Total	
Main Scheme Grant	991,309	0	37,233,789	0	0	(37,350,891)	874,206	-5.08%	
Associated Main Scheme Grants	1,494,267	0	1,358,121			(1,621,523)	1,230,864	9.38%	
Capital Schedule	12,992,898	0	5,809,936			(11,788,449)	7,014,384	75.88%	
Further Education & Training	677,443	0	48,411,986			(46,915,534)	2,173,895	16.39%	
Youth Affairs	60,670	0	862,358			(849,516)	73,513	-0.78%	
Agency	802,119	0	3,337,502			(3,744,794)	394,826	4.13%	
Self Financing	48,668	0	674,328			(620,511)	102,485	0.09%	
Third Party Funds	0	0	23,312			(23,312)	0	0.00%	
Totals	17,067,373	0	97,711,332	0	0	(102,914,531)	11,864,173		

NTMA

On Investment at end of December 2023		€11,004,084
Interest Earned to end of December 2023		€96,777
Interest Rate		1%
Investment Term	7 day	€11,004,084
	30 day	0



Creditor Payments

Fourth Quarter

5,069 invoices, amounting to €14,437,190.69 were paid.

Of these, 51% were paid within 15 days of receipt of invoices, and a further 45% were paid within 30 days.

103 purchase orders for €20,000.00 or above, totalling €7,425,138.70 inclusive of VAT were paid.

Corporate Services

Capital Projects

Clonaslee College

- Additional ASA Accommodation 2022 & 2023 – awaiting building contract to validate BCAR.

St Fergal's College

- Additional Equipment List for various subject areas approved by DoE.

Dunamase College

- Modular Accommodation – 6 classrooms. Ground floor is now complete. Awaiting external stairs (for fire access) to be installed before sign-off on first floor.

Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac

- Science Rooms – Report and costing completed and sent to DoE for approval.

Other

- Schools Photovoltaic Programme (Solar Panels) – Offaly schools in Phase 1.

Mountmellick FET Centre

- Proposed Car Park – Letter of Intent sent to Contractors; works to commence in February 2024.

Mount Lucas

- Expression of Interest Stage 3 and Stage 4 on E-Tenders.

Kilcruttin Workshop

- Electrical Apprenticeship – works completed November 2023.



Procurement

- Print & Design – Tender Competition evaluated, sent to OGP for review.
- Tenders for Bus and Coach Hire Services and Contract Cleaning being prepared.
- Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC); the Consultant completed RAAC surveys for 12 schools in Laois and Offaly which have been sent to DoE.

ICT

- Configuration and roll out of Reach fund devices has commenced.
- Ongoing work with Internal Audit Unit and KOSI regarding ICT Audit and baseline standards.
- Setup of new FET building in Rathdowney has been completed.
- New phone system ordered for Birr OETC.
- Network separation with additional broadband line for Birr OETC in progress.
- New asset management system will be purchased this month.
- Evaluation of email scanning solution for schools to take place this month.
- Interactive TVs for new ASD unit in Clonaslee College due for installation in the third week of January.
- Next email phishing campaign to be rolled out this month.
- New Firewalls to be installed in Birr OETC, Kilcruttin Business Park, and additional building in Rathdowney.
- Upgrade of Portlaoise Institute computer lab to take place in the coming weeks
- Regular maintenance, prevention, and replacement requests on an ongoing basis across schools, centres and offices.

General

- Provision of IT training for OSD staff.
- Working with IAU on Stage 1 and 2 of Cyber Security Baseline Standards.
- Working with Communications Officer on development of new corporate website.
- Preparation for annual SIPO returns.
- Completion of lean training for middle/senior management.
- Dealing with an increased number of FOI/GDPR/DSAR requests.

Joe Cunningham

30 January 2024

Members thanks the CE for his comprehensive report and a discussion took place on same.



A member of the Board raised a question as to whether all Ukrainian students were able to secure school places in the Laois/Offaly area. The CE confirmed that all students had been accommodated to date, that the Realt Coordinator is working closely with the schools to ensure that they are properly facilitated, and that accessing the school transport systems has been a challenge at times.

A member commented on the progress of the Tertiary Programme link with SETU and the CE confirmed that the programming was going very well and that this project would be expanded in the coming year with links currently being explored with other Higher Education Institutions.

A member inquired about the Apprenticeship programme and asked about the backlog at Phase 2. The Chief Executive confirmed that training has recommenced at the ESB Training Centre in Portlaoise, and that additional capacity is now being provided in Mountrath and Tullamore for both Electrical and Plumbing Apprentices which will reduce the waiting list.



13.Votes of Sympathy

The Board extended its sympathy to the following on their recent family bereavements:

- The Rice family, on the death of Conor, son of Ronan Rice former CEO of Laois VEC
- Hazel Guinan - Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac
- Paradzai Havatitye - Portlaoise Prison
- Maria Spain - Banagher College
- Aileen Moylan - Banagher College
- Ide Mullane - Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac
- Joleen Deering - Portarlington FET Centre
- Tina Farrell - Admin Offices, Portlaoise
- David Farrell - Dunamase College
- Sandra Duggan - Portlaoise Institute
- Mary Leech - Midlands Skills Centre
- Nettie Emerson - Midlands Prison

14.Votes of Congratulations

- Birthday wishes for Board Members Catherine Fitzgerald and Pdraig Fleming.
- Banagher College who have advanced to the semi-finals of the Leinster Schools senior hurling 'B' championship.

15.Board Effectiveness Evaluation

Feedback on the Board Effectiveness Evaluation outcome was compiled and uploaded to SharePoint before the meeting for review by Board members. The Chairperson thanked the Board members for their contribution and for completing the Evaluation form with the positive feedback acknowledged by the Executive.

16.ETB Post Primary BOM Terms of Reference

The ETB Post Primary BOM Terms of Reference were uploaded to SharePoint in advance of the meeting for members to review.

Proposed by: John Carroll

Seconded by: Robert Mc Dermott



17.AOB

The Chairperson informed the Board that she had attended an IPA Conference in December. She also referenced the ETB Code of Governance and its requirements for the composition of the Board. Under heading 1.11 'While the legislation does not specify a maximum number of terms which individual board members should serve, good corporate governance practice suggests an upper limit of two full terms, or a maximum of 10 years, of appointment on a board.'

Members noted same.

18.Date and Venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Tuesday 27 February 2024. Venue to be advised.

Signed: *Evelyn Dunne*
Evelyn Dunne (Mar 8, 2024 00:37 GMT)

Date: 4th March 2024

Chairperson



Appendix

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