



A meeting of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board was held on Monday 24 May 2021 at 4:30pm via Microsoft Teams.

A training session on EU General Data Protection Regulations was presented by Sinead Byrne, AllOne Corporate Solutions Ltd., prior to the meeting.

PRESENT

Cllr Robert McDermott (Chairperson)

Ms Molly Buckley

Cllr John Carroll

Cllr Clare Claffey

Ms Mary Cotter-Bracken

Mr Dave Cullen

Ms Evelyn Dunne

Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald

Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick

Cllr Pdraig Fleming

Mr Shane Flesk

Mr John Mollin

Mr Frank Smith

Cllr Mary Sweeney

Mr Niall Tully

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Joe Cunningham, Chief Executive

Ms Marie Bracken, Director OSD

Ms Jean Keating, Corporate Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Frank Moran and Maura Brophy.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS LOETB MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on 29 March 2021 were circulated to members. Members approved the minutes and they were signed by the Chairperson.

Proposed: Evelyn Dunne

Seconded: Molly Buckley

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. GOVERNANCE

Marie Bracken, Director of OSD, informed members that Risk Management Committee will be meeting in the coming weeks to review and update the Risk Register. It will be brought to

Chairmans
Initials

the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee on the 9 July to review, and to the Board for approval thereafter.

Conflict 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.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

The CE presented the following report to members.

Schools Directorate

Schools

Phase one of the Leaving Certificate Accredited Grades subject alignment process is now under way in schools. Schools are also continuing to support students as they prepare to sit the Leaving Certificate Examinations which commence on 9 June. It has been a very challenging year for all students and staff, particularly those preparing for examinations. The hard work and commitment of all is acknowledged and very much appreciated. We wish students well in their upcoming exams.

Schools are finalising alternative arrangements now in place for assessment and reporting on the learning achievements of students concluding Junior Cycle in 2021.

Credit is due to our school leaders and all school staff for their enormous efforts in sustaining public health measures and working to keep Covid -19 out of other schools. At the end of year, it is crucial that this situation is maintained, and schools are working closely with students, parents, and all stakeholders in this regard. Families are being encouraged to support schools in keeping Covid-19 out of schools, by ensuring they follow national public health guidance, and staying away if anyone has and symptoms of Covid-19 infection.

The next few weeks are particularly important as the Department of Education has confirmed that candidates will not be allowed to present for their examinations if they been diagnosed with Covid-19; have any symptoms of Covid-19; are a close contact of a confirmed case; or develop these symptoms at any stage over the course of the examinations; are self-isolating, have been advised to self-isolate, or to restrict their movements.

All schools participated in Refresher Child Safeguarding Training for Designated Liaison Persons (DLP) and Deputy DLPs.

LOETB Schools' Support have provided a suite of Blending Learning Webinars to support and facilitate collaboration with our teachers. This professional development complements the existing IT supports to schools as well as the Blended Learning Community of Practice which has been established between all schools. The areas covered in the webinars include Using Class Notebook, Using Microsoft Stream for Blended Learning, Designing and Using Rubrics for Assessment and Feedback.

LOETB Schools' Support have received funding from Trinity Access to deliver the Programme for Enhancing Digital Literacy to Parents (PEDL) programme to parents. This programme supports parents to acquire digital skills and knowledge to support their child in the evolving educational landscape. It assists parents to effectively engage with the schools' learning platform, ensuring they can support their child, as well as gaining confidence themselves.

Youth Services

UBU Your Place Your Space 2021

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) allocated LOETB €233,653 for this Grant Scheme to administer to Tullamore Youth Project, Offaly Traveller

Movement, and Youth Work Ireland Laois. LOETB are currently conducting Performance and Oversight Reviews of each funded organisation for Q4 of 2020 and Q1 of 2021, which will be completed by 31 May 2021. There will be further Performance and Oversight review meetings scheduled for July and October 2021.

UBU Your Place Your Space 2021/New Greenfield Projects 2021

DCEDIY is making an annual budget of €120,000 available for six new UBU projects in a number of ETBs including LOETB. The purpose of this budget is to allow for the development of one new service in Laois or Offaly to meet the needs of young people (vulnerable, marginalised and at risk) as identified in the Area Profile Needs Assessment and Service Requirement (APNASR) Tool. The initial consultation process with relevant stakeholders in Laois and Offaly took place throughout April. The next Coordination Group meeting will take place on Tuesday 18 May 2021. It is expected that LOETB will submit the final submission proposed recommendation (re Greenfield site for Laois Offaly) of the APNASR Tool to include the one “greenfield site” to DCEDIY for approval in June 2021.

Local Youth Club Grant Scheme 2021

DCEDIY allocated LOETB €73,991 for this Grant Scheme to administer to successful Local Youth Club / Group applicants. The scheme supports voluntary youth club activities for young people, with priority given to young people between the ages of 10 and 21. This grant was advertised on LOETB’s website and in the 26 April 2021 edition of the Leinster Express and Tullamore Tribune. Closing date for return of applications is 04 June 2021. It is expected that the number of active clubs and applications will be lower this year, due to COVID.

Youth Capital Funding Scheme 2021 for Youth Services and Clubs/Groups (formerly the Youth Capital Grant Scheme and the Local Youth Club Equipment Grant Scheme)

DCEDIY allocated LOETB €43,969 for this Grant Scheme to administer to successful targeted staff led youth services and youth clubs / groups applicants for 2021.

Under this Grant Scheme, the *Youth Club Equipment Grant Scheme 2021* is available to youth clubs / groups for eligible expenditure up to a maximum of €500 incurred over the period 1 January to 31 December 2021. The small capital grant is a contribution to a once off purchase/installation that is capital/ICT in nature. Contributions to capital works to premises where the club will benefit are permitted.

Under this Grant Scheme, the *Youth Capital Funding Scheme 2021* is available to DCEDIY funded youth projects (UBU Your Place Your Space schemes and Youth Information Centres) for small to medium capital grants (minor works and/or equipment). A provisional sum of €26,261 has been allocated to this scheme.

Applications have been made available to all eligible Funded Organisations, Regional Youth group contacts and local youth club / groups. Closing date for return of applications is 14 May 2021.

LGBTI+ Youth Service Grant Scheme 2021

DCEDIY allocated €5,000 to LOETB for this Grant Scheme to administer to successful applicants. The initiative is intended to provide for additional youth worker hours dedicated specifically to supporting young LGBTI+ people. Applications are currently at the appraisal stage.

Youth Work Committee (YWC)

The next YWC meeting of 2021 will take place on Tuesday, 8 June 2021.

Music Generation

Current MG Laois Activities/ Projects

Musical Memories and Ukulele Ceilí, are intergenerational music projects in Music Generation Laois and Music Generation Offaly-Westmeath respectively. Following a successful application to the Creative Ireland ‘Creativity in Older Age Fund 2021,’ led by MG Laois, we have secured

Chairmans
Initials

€31,000 to partner together, to expand both projects across our regions, maximising resources and building upon our learning and successes, to access new communities and new participants, using music as a tool to combat the isolation that older people are experiencing as a result of Covid-19.

The Musical Memories team travelled to Community Nursing Units in Shaen and Mountmellick on 6 and 7 May, to perform for residents aboard the Bandwagon, as part of Bealtaine Festival 2021 – the musicians were joined by Mountmellick Mens' shed Singers who also take part in this project. In addition, a large-scale zoom concert, with special guest Trudi Lalor, featuring performances from all participating groups (schools, mens' sheds) took place on Friday 29 April. There are over 150 people take part in Musical Memories each week.

Sister Cities: Laois + Franklin, Tennessee Update: We continue to develop a partnership with Franklin, Tennessee, twinned with Co. Laois. On the 3 and 7 May, we programmed a series of live performances on zoom featuring ensembles from MG Laois and bands from Franklin Highschool.

John Spillane's New Album: John Spillane's new album, '100 Snow White Horses' is now on general release. The title track '100 Snow White Horses' was commissioned by Music Generation Laois and the Laois Arts Office in 2016. We are delighted that our harpers feature on the album. We look forward to a Laois album launch with John Spillane very soon.

Upcoming MG Laois Activities/ Events

Dunamase College TY Video: We are currently creating a video with/about current TY students in Dunamase College, giving an insight into their participation in a MG Laois music programme under Creative Schools, and the wider context of taking part in TY during Covid-19 – to be showcased on Awards Night 21 May.

Cruinniú na nÓg: MG Laois presents a series of body percussion workshops on 10, 11 and 12 June to mark Cruinniú na nÓg with 'Beat Goes On' body percussion specialists – Cruinniú na nÓg is a national day of creativity for children and young people, supported by Creative Ireland Laois.

Bandwagon Schools Tour: The Bandwagon will travel to MG Laois Primary Schools to celebrate the end of a challenging year, by bringing a specially curated roadshow of MG Laois Musicians to perform live for staff and students on the 25, 26, 27 May and the 1 June. Funded by the Laois County Council 'Keep Well' campaign 2021.

Creative Ireland Laois Funded Rock & Pop Summer School: MG Laois' annual Summer School of Rock and Pop will be expanded this year to run across 2 weeks in July, with a special emphasis on song-writing, and a guest musician series. Guest Musicians will work alongside MG Laois Musician Educators, the Summer School will inspire and facilitate young people to create original music, and provide opportunities for participants to jam together in bands and perform on the Dunamase Theatre stage.

FET Directorate

QQI Inaugural Review

QQI's Expert panel visited LOETB on 12 April. Over 30 meetings took place with approximately 175 participants including learners, staff, management, Board members, and representatives from a wide range of our partners including employers, third level providers and regional stakeholders. The panel feedback was extremely positive outlining our FET Service as agile, responsive and inclusive with clear evidence that we are meeting the needs of the region. A draft report will be forwarded to LOETB for feedback before the final report and recommendations are published by QQI.

Expansion of Apprenticeship provision

SOLAS contacted LOETB to support the significant back log for ESB apprentices. At present there are 250-300 ESB apprentices waiting for Phase 2 training. This will lead to a significant skills shortage over the coming years if it is not addressed. Following a meeting with the ESB and SOLAS, LOETB has agreed to deliver this training to support the ESB apprentices. The training will commence in August with the first 50 apprentices going through phase 2 training before the end of 2021 with another 100 trained in 2022. This provision will play a critical role in ensuring that the back log is cleared and the potential for a skills shortage is greatly reduced. The provision will be managed and quality assured by LOETB.

FET Funding Allocation 2021

LOETB received confirmation of our FET allocation for 2021. This year the total allocation (excluding capital) is €33,080,257 and is in line with our FAR 4 bid. This allocation is a 16% increase on the 2020 allocation and confirmation that LOETBs integrated FET approach is working and fully supported by SOLAS. In line with other years, all budgets have been allocated to FET Centres and Services and are jointly monitored by FET Management and the finance team.

FET Devolved Capital Allocation 2021

In 2020, SOLAS introduced a devolved capital allocation for ETBs. This allocation is designed to support ETBs undertaking small capital works, or for purchasing equipment such as IT etc. These projects cannot exceed €75,000 and, as with all projects, must be procured in line with our procurement policy and procedures.

LOETB's devolved capital allocation for 2021 is €435,000. This will be used for the following works:

- Refurbishment and repurposing rooms in Banagher, Mountmellick and Edenderry FET Centres.
- IT fit out costs in Midland Skills Centre and our new FET Information Centres in Tullamore and Portlaoise
- Fit out costs for Portlaoise FET Centre on the new Ridge Road site

OSD Directorate

Human Resources

Recruitment

The following staff appointments have been made during the period April to May 2021:

- 1 x APII post Tullamore College (in appeal stage)
- 2 x Acting APII posts Tullamore College (in appeal stage)
- 1 x Administrative Officer – Grade VII
- 3 x Assistant Staff Officer – Grade IV
- 14 teaching posts
- Sub teacher panel

The following posts have been advertised

- 1 x Deputy Principal Portlaoise College
- 1 x Deputy Principal Tullamore College
- 2 x APII posts St Fergal's College
- 1 x API post Dunamase College
- 15 Teaching posts
- Electrical instructor posts

Payroll/Personnel

Number of staff paid each pay run:

02/04/2021 1,073,598.97 881 staff
16/04/2021 1,060,153.06 879 staff
30/04/2021 1,054,305.72 913 staff
14/05/2021 1,064,935.01 886 staff

Corporate Services

Capital Projects and Buildings Works

Clonaslee College

Approval received from DoE to proceed to construction for project – Grant Total €641,673.06.
Allen Kenny Construction successful Tenderer.

Portlaoise College – Phase 1 Reconfiguration Classrooms

Approval Letter received from DoE. Grant for Total Works of €368,000. Currently in the process of appointing Consultant for this project.

Portlaoise College – Canteen Canopy

Works gone to Tender with responses due 24 May.

Oaklands Community College, Edenderry

Stage 1 meeting held with DoE end of April 2021. Stage 1 signed off and approved by DoE.

Portlaoise Head Office/FET Accommodation

Consultant appointed. Consultant working on specifications etc.

Dunamase College – New School

Design Team appointed end April 2021. Details sent to DoE.

Cloneygowan National School

16 Responses received to Consultant Design Team Tenders. Design team evaluated 7 May 2021.
Currently in standstill period.

Procurement

Recruitment Agency Services

Thirteen responses received to Tender. Evaluation completed – currently in standstill period of Tender.

Lean Training

Contract awarded to Andy Brophy (Lean 2 Innovative Training).

Supply of Video Production Services

Tender up on Etenders with responses due back 17 May 2021.

Scaffolding Components and Systems

Tender up on ETenders with responses due back 25 May 2021.

ICT

Birr FET Centre fit out completed. Still waiting on Eir to install new lines for broadband.

Work on moving office data to SharePoint has begun.

~~New Wi-Fi system installed and commissioned in Portlaoise College.~~

Installation of ICT equipment in the remaining rooms of Tower Hill has been completed.

The process has started with Eir to install a GN broadband connection to the new Admin Office.

Mount Lucas new building fit out delayed because of pandemic. Due for completion week starting 17 May.

150 iPads currently being configured for Mitigation Against Educational Disadvantage Fund (MAEDF).

Assessment of Office 365 platform being conducted to calculate licence numbers required for new Microsoft Campus Agreement brokered by HeaNET. Additional security within the platform is also being investigated.

Requirements for new academic year now being received by several schools which include hardware purchasing and improvements to networks.

New Firewalls due to be installed in Tullamore College and Coláiste Naomh Cormac Kilcormac week starting 24 May.

Due to recent events with the HSE our Head of ICT has joined a Cyber Security group with ETBI to look at solutions available to improve network security as a sector.

Corporate Services

Communications Officer continues work on branding, from Birr campus across social media and websites. Birr Centre is almost complete, and Abbeyleix and Portarlinton are next in line.

Kilcormac - 30276.000

Comisinéir Teanga report received, receiving a 3/5 on their scoring matrix. Work being undertaken with School and Centre on signage and phone auto-attendants and voicemails. These activities expected to conclude in late August. We anticipate that this may move us to a score of 2 in the next review which we currently understand will be mid-2022.

Business Interruption Claim to IPB has been accepted in the amount of €50,000.

Working with schools on centralised procurement of additional Construction Studies equipment (laser cutter/engravers) as a result of an equipment specification change by the DoE.

Finance

Budgets

Monthly monitoring of expenditure continues for all schools and centres.

Creditor Payments – Quarter 1 2021

2,418 invoices, amounting to €5,824,084.40 were paid in the first quarter of 2021.

Of these, 47% were paid within 15 days of receipt of invoices, and a further 39% were paid within 30 days.

31 purchase orders for €20,000 or above, totalling €1,855,670.88 inclusive of VAT, were paid in the first quarter of 2021.

Summary Finances

Current Summary of finances to end of April 2021.

Summary of Workings to End April 2021

ITEM	Opening Grant Cash Balance	Adjustment to Opening Balance	Receipts	Payments	Closing Grant Cash Balance	% of Overall Total
Main Scheme Pay Grant	1,304,431	0	8,314,489	(10,134,579)	(515,659)	-11.94%
Main Scheme ONP Grant	750,038	0	717,763	(1,238,795)	229,006	5.30%
Associated Main Scheme Grants	1,192,841	0	460,407	(270,496)	1,382,752	32.01%
Capital Schedule	1,115,258	0	747,585	(965,549)	897,294	20.78%
Further Education & Training	1,431,540	0	9,546,354	(9,959,185)	1,018,709	23.59%
Youth Affairs	793	0	166,826	(142,017)	25,602	0.60%
Agency	855,769	0	562,908	(326,280)	1,092,397	25.29%
Self-Financing	197,322	0	251,130	(278,675)	169,777	3.93%
Third Party Funds	2,598	0	16,620	0	19,218	0.44%
TOTAL	6,850,590	0	20,784,082	(23,315,576)	4,319,096	

The Chairperson thanked the CE for his comprehensive report and a discussion took place thereafter.

A member asked for more information on the tender for video production services. The CE informed members that video production is hugely important in targeting specific audiences for the promotion of services and in particular recruitment to courses. LOETB previously made videos on the provision of services in Tullamore and Mount Lucas. To ensure adherence to procurement thresholds, a Request for Tender has issued for the delivery of video production services.

A member asked the CE for further clarification on the 'green fields site' mentioned in the Youth Services section of the report. The CE confirmed that the funding of €120,000 is for a new green field site and is not a top up for any the existing three funded projects. The Area Profile Needs Assessment and Service Requirement (APNASR) Tool is being used by Joe Thompson, Youth Services Manager, in consultation with the DCEDIY and a report on the analysis of the outcome of

Chairmans
Initials

same will be completed in the coming weeks. The CE will update members on the outcome of the report at the next meeting.

A discussion took place on the expansion of the apprenticeship provision and members welcomed this news.

6. FINANCE

Bank Overdraft

LOETB's overdraft facility will expire in June 2021. At the March meeting of the Board, members agreed in principle that the Board should borrow an amount of up to €4 million for the purposes of carrying out the Board's functions and accordingly an overdraft facility be put in place for one year. Confirmation of the sanction of Minister for DoE to put the overdraft facility in place was received on 26 April, 2021.

Members gave approval to proceed with the overdraft facility.

Proposed: Evelyn Dunne

Seconded: Frank Smith

7. CORRESPONDENCE

Item No	Correspondence From	Date / Ref No.	Details	Comments
1.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0021-2021	COVID-19 Arrangement for Teachers and SNAs -To Ed Partners	Noted by Members
2.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0022-2021	Breastfeeding Breaks for all staff other than persons employed as Teachers and Special Needs Assistants In Education and Training Boards	Noted by Members
3.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0023-2021	Allocation of Assistant Principal Posts 2021-2022	Noted by Members
4.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0026-2021	Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) - Supplementary Assignment Arrangements for the 2021-2022 school year	Noted by Members
5.	Department of Education and Skills	CL0028-2021	Cost Limits for Post-primary School Buildings	Noted by Members
6.	Department of Finance	CL0001-2021	Control of Secured Borrowing by General Government	Noted by Members

Chairmans
Initials

8. ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Ms Bracken informed the Board that LOETB submitted the 2020 Annual Report to the DoE. The DoE requested one additional item be added to the report under the financial statements section which was brought to the attention of members. Members approved the change and adopted the Annual Report for 2020.

Proposed: Molly Buckley
Seconded: John Carroll

9. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

The following minutes of the Committees of the Board were circulated to members prior to the meeting. Members noted same.

- Audit and Risk Committee Meeting, 18 February 2021
- Finance Committee Meeting, 18 February 2021
- Youth Work Committee, 10 June 2019, 25 November 2020
- Tullamore College, 22 February 2021

10. APPOINTMENT TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Chairperson informed the Board that he received one eligible nominee to the Finance Committee, Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick.

Proposed: John Carroll
Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

Cllr Fitzpatrick was appointed to the Finance Committee.

11. APPOINTMENT TO CLONASLEE COLLEGE

The Chairperson informed members that Lucy Feighery is being nominated as an LOETB nominee to the Board of Management at Clonaslee College and read a short biography to members. Members approved the nomination.

Proposed: Molly Buckley
Seconded: Padraig Fleming

12. UPDATE ON THE SALE OF THE LSU BUILDING, BANAGHER

The CE informed members that the booking deposit has been paid in respect of the sale of the LSU Building in Banagher. The solicitor representing LOETB on this matter has notified the purchaser that the sale is subject to contract/contract denied and is also subject to Board approval as it is a reserved matter for the Board to formally accept and agree the sale of the building. Members formally approved the sale of the building.

Kilhamazoo - 32576-000

Proposed: John Carroll
Seconded: Clare Claffey

13. NATIONAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AGENCY – CUSTOMER MANDATE

At a recent Finance Committee meeting members noted that LOETB was incurring negative interest with the bank and requested that other opportunities regarding investment be investigated.

Under the Education and Training Board Act 2013, an ETB can invest money with the NTMA. Initial discussions regarding same have taken place with the NTMA. Funding received from the DoE or SOLAS will be lodged with the NTMA. This process will be managed by our finance department.

Permission from the Board to invest in Central Treasury Notes with NTMA is required, and Board approval for the completion of the Customer Mandate lodgement of funds with the NTMA is also required. Members approved same.

Proposed: Mary Sweeney
Seconded: Evelyn Dunne

14. ESB WAY LEAVE, OAKLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Ms Bracken informed members that LOETB were awaiting Department approval to carry out works to the transformer at the football pitch at Oaklands Community College. The DoE have agreed with the way leave and Board approval is required in order to proceed the matter. Members approved same.

Proposed: Frank Smith
Seconded: Clare Claffey

15. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

A vote of sympathy was passed to:

- To Van Furey Shinnars, ICT Department, on the passing of his uncle
- To Colin Boyle, ICT Department, on the passing of his uncle
- To Michelle Devoy, ICT Department, on the passing of her uncle
- Stella Fitzgerald, St Fergal’s College, on the passing of her aunt
- Gabriella Hegedus, SNA at Dunamase College, on the passing of her father
- Amanda Harkin, Clonaslee College, on the passing of her mother
- Maureen McNally Kelly, Banagher FET, on the passing of her father
- Lorna Middleton, Tutor in Tullamore Adult Literacy Service, on the passing of her father
- Helen Nunan, teacher at Oaklands Community College, on the passing of her aunt
- Sean Conroy, St. Fergal’s College Rathdowney, on the passing of his aunt

16. VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS

Chairmans
Initials

Kallimazoo - 325 6 000

A vote of congratulations was passed to:

The QQI team on their hard work during the recent inaugural review.
To Shíofra Ryan, a student from St. Brendan's Community School, Birr, who was the overall winner of the Senior Category of the Enterprise Awards with a project called "An Tionchar".

17. AOB

Nomination to the Youth Work Committee

Ms Bracken informed members that Laois Comhairle na nÓg submitted a nomination of Jack Bowe to the Youth Work Committee.

Members approved the nomination.

Proposed: John Mollin
Seconded: Padraig Fleming

18. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Monday 26 July 2021 at 4.30pm, via Microsoft Teams.

Signed: 

Date: 26/7/21

Chairperson

Chairmans
Initials

Kallamazoo - 307474660