



## KWETB Governance Report 2020

This Corporate Governance Report presents an overview of the high-level governance activities of KWETB in 2020. Kildare and Wicklow ETB are committed to continued enhancement of governance structures across the organisation. Establishing policies and procedures to support staff in practical implementation of requirements, ensuring effective internal control and robust risk management processes.

Key areas of focus for in 2020 included:

Corporate Governance Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial programme of work completed in May 2020 with 107 deliverables completed</li> </ul>
Statement of Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion and implementation of KWETB's Statement of Strategy 2020-2024</li> </ul>
Response to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of COVID-19 Response Plans across schools, centres and administration offices</li> <li>Business Continuity Plan</li> </ul>
Board & Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board &amp; committees completed their work programme. Formal induction/training to support members in their roles was provided</li> </ul>
Internal Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed policies and procedures, began the process of reviewing internal control review process</li> </ul>
Statutory Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successfully submitted statutory reports as required by the ETB Act 2013</li> </ul>

## Corporate Governance Programme

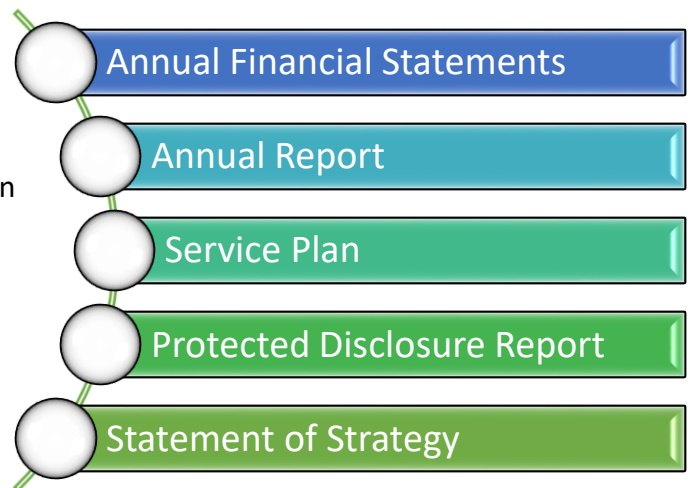
The Corporate Governance Programme commenced in December 2018 to implement the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs and in response to the recommendations of the Thorn Report, C&AG audit reports and other relevant statutory instruments and circulars. The programme was implemented across the organisation diligently, comprehensively and in a transparent manner. The programme focused on 26 areas of work with 107 deliverables, and has had a substantial and positive impact on governance practices across KWETB.

The programme was overseen by a Steering Group with regular reports brought to the Board, the programme was completed in May 2020. An official external review of the programme was completed in November 2020. This external review validates the quality of the work done as part of the Corporate Governance Programme.

## Reporting

KWETB is bound by legislation to submit reports regularly and as required by the ETB Act 2013, furthermore, KWETB submit regular reports on monthly/quarterly basis to the Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS. These reports include, reports on income and expenditure, staffing levels, bank balances and more.

Statutory reports, i.e. those defined in legislation are crucial in ensuring effectiveness and transparency in how KWETB operates. The table below demonstrates KWETB's compliance with achieving statutory reporting deadlines as defined in the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and other legislation;



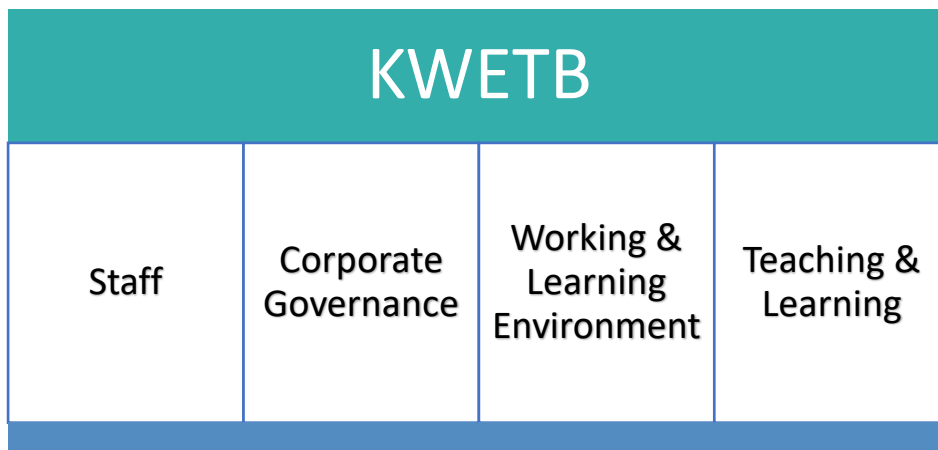
Report	Required to be submitted by	Achieved
<b>Ethics Acts (annual statements)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> January	✓
<a href="#">Annual Service Plan</a>	1 <sup>st</sup> March	✓
<b>Annual Financial Statements</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> April	✓
<b>Annual Report</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> June	✓
<a href="#">Protected Disclosure Annual Report</a>	30 <sup>th</sup> June	✓
<b>Annual Charity Return</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October	✓

A 'Deadline Tracker' is also in operation to monitor and record the submission of statutory and other departmental reports throughout the year. As part of the Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA) with the Department of Education, these deadlines are formally reviewed.

Kildare and Wicklow ETB have an agreed Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA) with the Department of Education, the agreement is a performance contract in which an agreed level of service is formalised between the Department and KWETB. The agreement supports specific high level goals and objectives and

defines the output and outcome of performance indicators on which performance of KWETB is measured. KWETB commits to the targets specified in the PDA and the Department formally reviews the PDA and outcomes thereof, at least annually. Parallel to the PDA is the Oversight Agreement (OA) which sets out the terms of the relationship between the Department and KWETB. An obligation of the OA is the quarterly submission of ‘early warning reports’ to the department, ensuring the Department is notified of any specific issues that may pose a risk to KWETB in adequate time and support KWETB in achieving a solution.

One of the key achievements of KWETB as an organisation in 2020 culminated in the completion of [KWETB’s Statement of Strategy 2020-2024](#) that outlines plans for the delivery of education and training in counties Kildare and Wicklow over the next five years. Based on our values of; integrity, learner-centred, respect and excellence, the four pillars of strategic priority were identified;



All KWETB’s stakeholders can be assured by the presence and implementation of the Statement of Strategy that KWETB is committed to delivering ‘*A brighter future, learning with KWETB*’.

A formal mechanism of planning, monitoring and reporting on the achievement of SoS objectives is in operation in KWETB, consisting of a facilitators group co-ordinating on behalf of the three directorates, liaising with a project manager who compiles reports for the SoS Steering group. As this process has commenced recently, KWETB will evaluate and review the process at end of year one, to ensure the SoS is being managed in the most efficient and effective manner.

### Board activities

The Board completed a busy work programme in 2020, fulfilling their reserved function obligations by approving/adopting;

- Service Plan 2020
- Draft Annual Financial Statements 2019
- Statement of Strategy 2020-2024
- Annual Report 2019
- Attendance of members at ETBI Conference
- Overdraft facility
- Leasing arrangements

Furthermore, the Board provides guidance and assistance to KWETB, holding 7 Board meetings to complete their statutory obligations and fulfilling the requirements as stated in the ETB Act 2013. The Board regularly receives updates on risk management, buildings projects, financial management and other activities of KWETB throughout the year. The Board availed of training provided by ETBI/DES and presented by Crowe Ireland to assist members in fulfilling their role as Board members. The Board completed a self-assessment effectiveness exercise and a feedback discussion was facilitated by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party.

2020 also saw our female staff representative elected onto the Board and the appointment of two replacement external Board members, completing our 21 member Board.

In order to assist the Board in their role and ensure information is provided in an effective and efficient manner, an internal process to manage and circulate information to the Board was developed and implemented in Q2 2020.

Further review and support for KWETB’s Board functions is ongoing and the executive are committed to working with the Board to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities as Board members.

The Board are supported in their functions by the Audit and Risk Committee and Finance Committee who report to the Board on matters within their terms of reference on a regular basis.

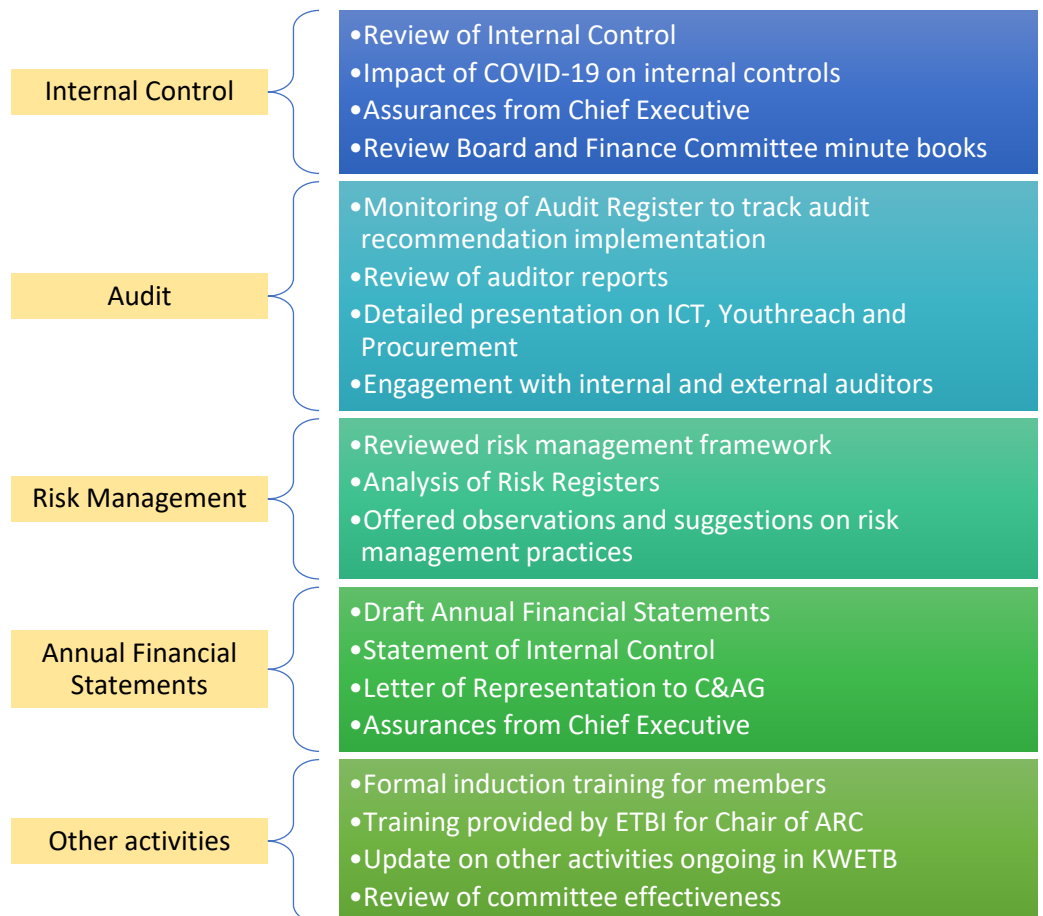
## Audit and Risk Committee

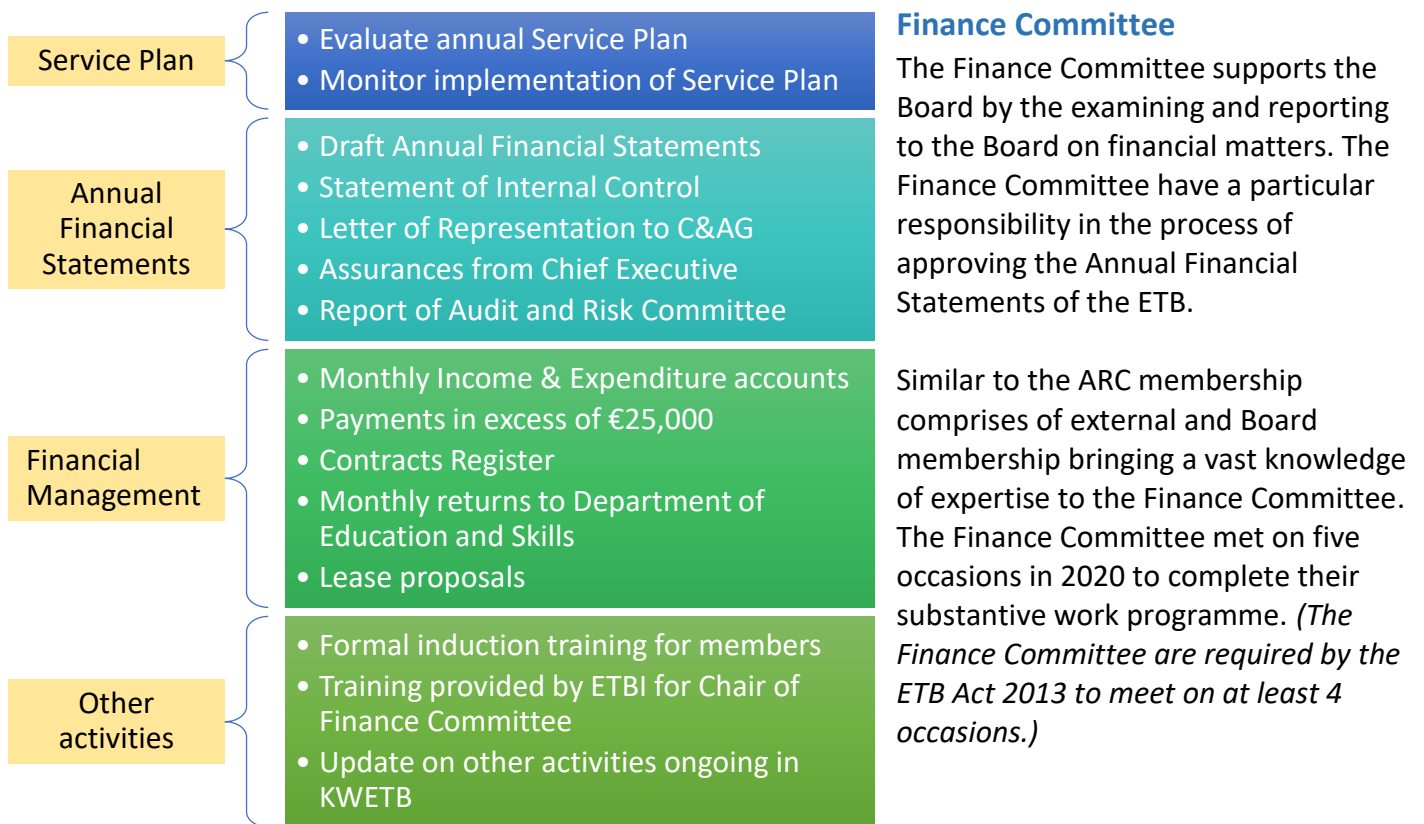
The Audit and Risk Committee have a particular role in supporting and advising the Board on risk management and audit activity.

The ARC membership consists of a combination of Board and external members, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to the committee.

The Audit and Risk Committee met on six occasions in 2020 to complete their comprehensive work programme, providing challenge and guidance to the executive of KWETB.

*(The Audit and Risk Committee are required by the ETB Act 2013 to meet on at least 4 occasions.)*





The activities of the ARC and Finance Committee detailed in the figures above, demonstrate the Committees fulfilling their statutory responsibility and providing effective support to the Board of KWETB. The two Committees play a particular role in assisting and advising the Board on audit and risk and financial matters, providing assurance that these matters have been appropriately reviewed and considered by the Committee.

Both committees will complete a self-evaluation of their own effectiveness, from this they will identify any opportunities for improving their effectiveness.

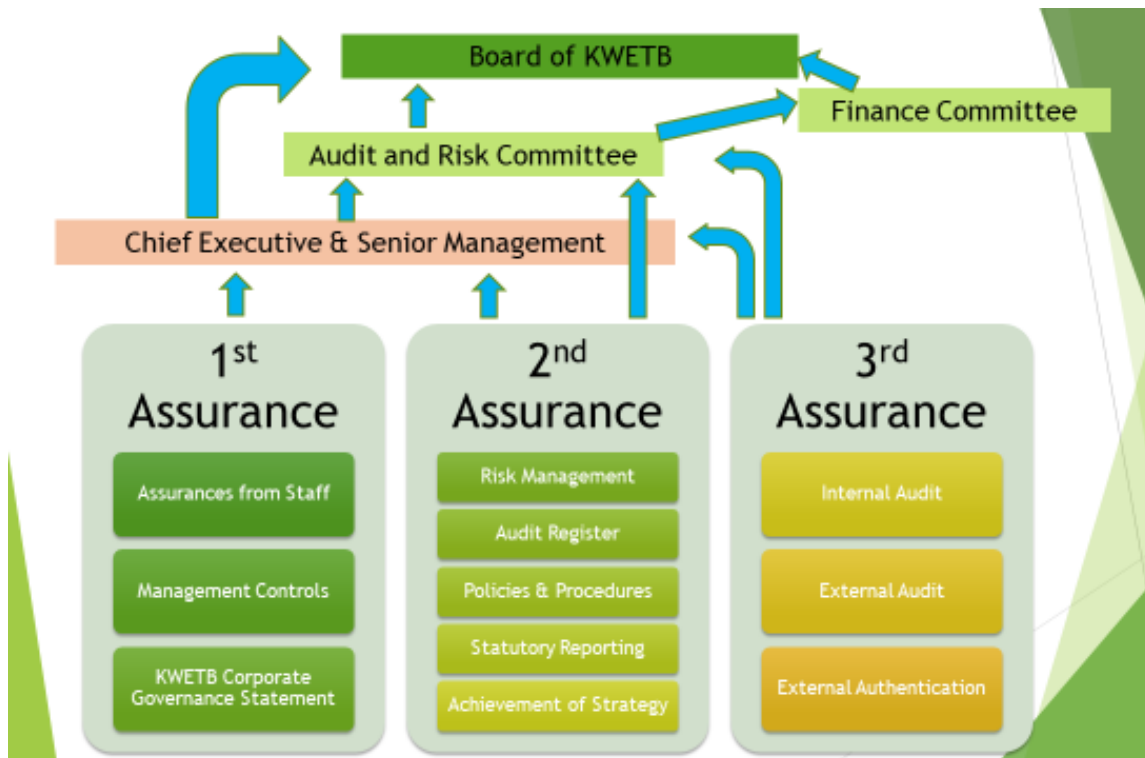
## Internal Control

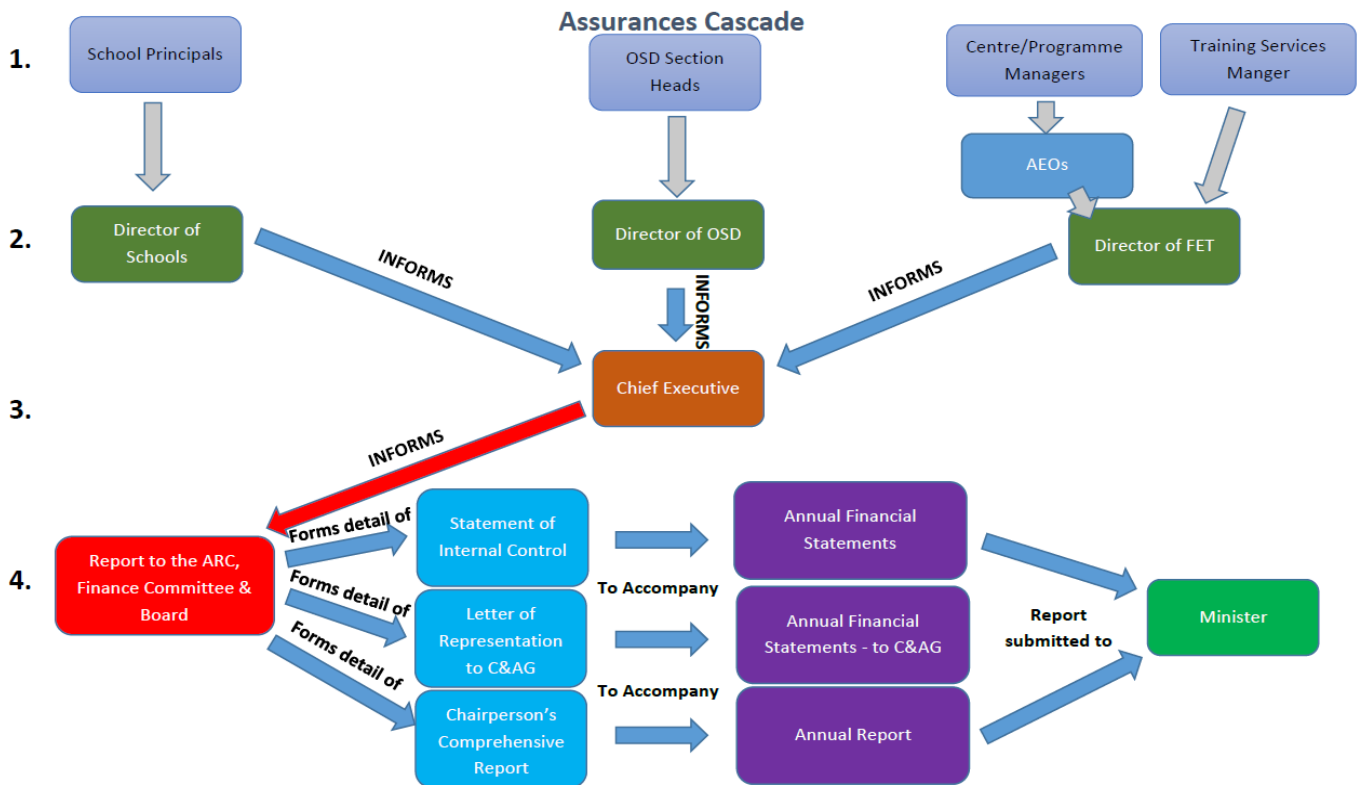
Internal control comprises not only internal check and internal audit, but the entire system of controls, financial and otherwise, including risk management and corporate governance (Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs 2019).

Annually the Audit and Risk Committee review internal control and report to the Board whether in their opinion internal control is operating efficiently and effectively in KWETB. To assist the ARC in their work, KWETB has developed a process to provide reasonable assurance that internal control is operating effectively. The process was refined in 2020, to ensure that the process of review itself is relevant and provides effective assurances to ourselves, senior management, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board. In addition the impact of COVID-19 on the control environment in 2020 is captured in the review of internal control, identifying the challenges and ensuring high standards of governance and internal control mechanisms are maintained, tweaking internal controls where necessary, e.g. use of Adobe sign.

The first step in reviewing internal control is to provide reasonable assurance to ourselves that internal control is operating effectively.

The figures below illustrates the mechanisms for providing assurances.





In addition to the annual review of internal control, KWETB are committed to enhancing standards of governance across the organisation; in the way we do things; the standard of governance we hold each accountable too and in the policies and procedures we put in place to ensure good governance. Providing assurance to ourselves, our staff and all stakeholders that robust policies and procedures are in place to uphold good governance.

To that end, 2020 saw the review, amendment and establishment of the following policies;

- Risk Management Policy – to reflect the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs
- Protected Disclosure Policy – to identify a dedicated Protected Disclosure Officer
- Gifts & Hospitality Policy – updated in line with best practice
- Leasing arrangements Policy – established to ensure best practice governance in leasing arrangements

It is intended in 2021 to develop a robust and comprehensive policy management framework that will enable the formal management of policy development, approval, implementation and review, to ensure that policies are appropriate, effective, and adhered to.

## Governance Schedule

To assist and support KWETB in planning for 2021, a comprehensive Governance Schedule was developed through GCON (Governance & Compliance Officers Network). This schedule details the key tasks and deadlines that need to be completed in order to ensure and demonstrate compliance. Furthermore, a 'Deadline tracker' is maintained to record submission of statutory reports, financial reports and other ad hoc reporting requirements of the Department of Education.

## School Governance

To support good governance in schools, mechanisms are being established to assist in the oversight of specific governance issues.

- A master list recording all KWETB school inspections over the last 10years is maintained.
- A Child Safeguarding Oversight Group is in operation in KWETB, to provide oversight and guidance in relation to implementing Child Safeguarding requirements. As part of this a Child Safeguarding Checklist is completed annually by all schools to assist them in complying with requirements and forming a Child Safeguarding Statement
- A compliance assessment review is being initiated to document the level of compliance CNS Board of Managements have in respect of the ETBI Handbook for CNS Board of Managements. A similar assessment will take place in respect of post-primary BOMs, once updated guidance is made available.



### FET Governance

A significant project is ongoing in FET to support quality assurance in FET. The development of a Quality Assurance Framework for FET is currently being implemented to refine and replace current legacy policies and procedures for QA and the QQI Inaugural Self-Evaluation and Quality Review, demonstrating enhanced QA across FET.

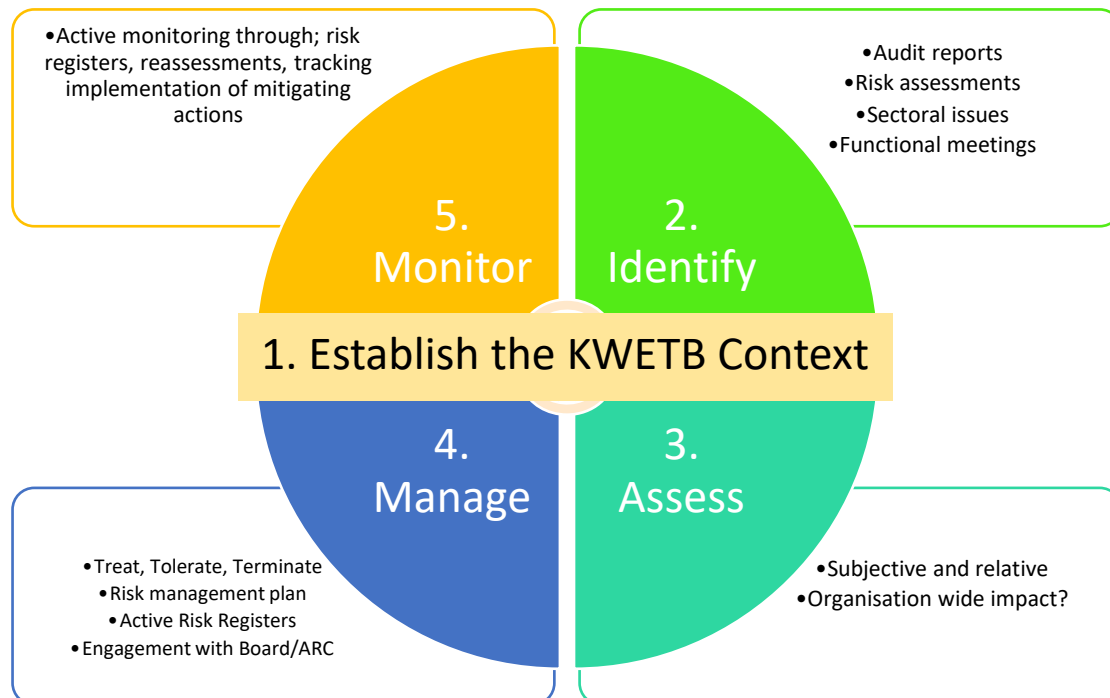
In addition a Youthreach Oversight Group has been established to oversee the provision of YR activities in KWETB. The group have responsibility for producing a common Operations Manual to support the provision of services in the YR programme.

### Provision of training

Training was provided by KWETB in a number of areas in 2020;

- Board training provided by ETBI/Crowe Ireland
- Chairperson training for Chair of Board, ARC and Finance Committee, provided by ETBI/Crowe Ireland
- Induction training for Audit and Risk Committee;
- Induction training for Finance Committee;
- Procurement training for budget holders and administrators;
- Covid-19 Return to work induction
- Guidance on GDPR while working remotely

## Risk Management



A key tool in good governance is the management and monitoring of risk, in 2020 a number of activities were undertaken to enhance risk management practices across the organisation;

- Amendment to format of Risk Registers – in line with best practice and to ensure articulate demonstration of risk management;
- Review and amendment to Risk Management Policy;
- Formal process to manage and report on risk management;
- Regular reporting on risk management to the ARC and Board;
- Appointment of Chief Risk Officer to co-ordinate risk management activities across the organisation;
- Engagement with IPB on best practice risk management activities.

Furthermore, one of the critical aspects of risk management is the **active** management of risk, directorates and functional areas meet regularly to review and report on risk management activities, escalating risk to the directorate or corporate risk register as appropriate. The ARC review the risk registers and risk management process regularly, providing advice and support to the executive and reassuring the Board that risk is being managed appropriately.

## Audit activity;

In line with the trend across the sector, 2020 saw numerous audits across a range of topics. From a central level work commenced on establishing a central audit management function to assist in the completion and co-ordination of audits. All audit findings are recorded and tracked as part of the Audit Register.

The below table depicts the audit activity of KWETB in 2020;

Audit	Conducted by	Audit Status	Opinion report received
Procurement Compliance	IAU-ETBs	Completed 2020	Adequate
Leasing arrangements in ETBs	C&AG	Completed 2020	Sectoral findings report awaited
Review of Previous Audit Recommendations	IAU-ETBs	Completed 2020	Adequate
Audit of Annual Financial Statements 2019	C&AG	Completed 2020	Management letter
Local Training Initiatives	IAU-ETBs	Commenced November 2020	Audit in progress
DEIS	IAU-ETBs	Commenced December 2020	Audit in progress

IAU-ETBs – Internal Audit Unit ETB

C&AG – Comptroller & Auditor General

## Audit Register

To provide assurance and as a mechanism to record, monitor implementation and report on audit findings and recommendations, KWETB operate a comprehensive Audit Register. This Audit Register, as required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs provides assurance to ourselves, senior management, the ARC and the Board that the recommendations of auditors are being appropriately addressed, in line with best practice governance. As agreed with the ARC, the Audit Register and key developments thereof is formally presented to the Committee on a bi-annual basis, with one of these detailed reviews coinciding with the annual review of internal control.

## Business Continuity Planning

Considerable work was achieved in relation to Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) in 2020. The importance of BCPs was exacerbated by the ongoing challenges of COVID-19. The continuation of services during the pandemic is evidential of the BCP. Continued refinement of the BCP and formal review of same in the coming year will ensure continued ongoing provision of essential services. The BCP and associated planning ensures that governance is not negatively impacted by changing work environments.

## Procurement activities

Key activities of the Procurement Team in 2020 have included;

- Provision of training for budget holders
- Dedicated Procurement Team established mid 2020
- Corporate Procurement Plan and MAPP completed
- Regularisation of 66% of non-compliant procurement since 2019

These activities contribute to the ongoing reduction in non-compliant aggregate procurement, which continues to remain a challenge for the sector.