



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARÁ AGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN
KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

Kildare and Wicklow ETB Governance Report 2022

The annual Governance Statement provides an overview of the key governance activities of KWETB in 2022. Kildare and Wicklow ETB remain committed to continued implementation and maintenance of robust governance structures that support the deliverance of our strategic objectives.

Governance Schedule

A comprehensive governance schedule, detailing the key legislative and governance requirements of KWETB from an Executive and Board perspective continued to aid KWETB in achieving its statutory reporting and governance requirements in 2022. Developed in collaboration at the Governance and Compliance Officers Network at ETBI level, the schedule documents and provides assurance that key governance deadlines are being achieved. The existence of such a schedule of key governance activities supports transparency, accountability and succession planning.

Reporting

Several statutory reports are required annually to be drafted and submitted in accordance with the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. Kildare and Wicklow ETB have developed formal processes to support the timely submission of such reporting requirements and several other reporting requirements to the Department of Education, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research and Skills, SOLAS and other funding bodies. The purpose of these reports is to demonstrate to stakeholders KWETB's commitment and effectiveness in achieving its statutory purpose. Table 1.1 details some of the key reporting deadlines achieved by KWETB in 2022.

Table 1.1 Reporting deadlines

Report Name	Required by/submitted to	Date for submission	Submitted on time (Y/N)
Ethics Return	Ethics Acts	31 st January	Yes
Service Plan 2022	ETB Act 2013, Department of Education	1 st March	Yes
Draft Annual Financial Statements	ETB Act 2013, Department of Education & C&AG	1 st April	Yes
Protected Disclosure Report	Protected Disclosure Act, Department of Education	30 th June	Yes
Annual Report	ETB Act 2013, Department of Education	30 th June	Yes
Charity Annual Return	Charities Act 2009	31 st October	Yes

The established ‘Deadline tracker’ is used to track and monitor reporting deadlines. The level of reporting to various sections of the department and other funders is significant, for which teams across KWETB work to complete reports to a high standard and submit them within the deadlines required.

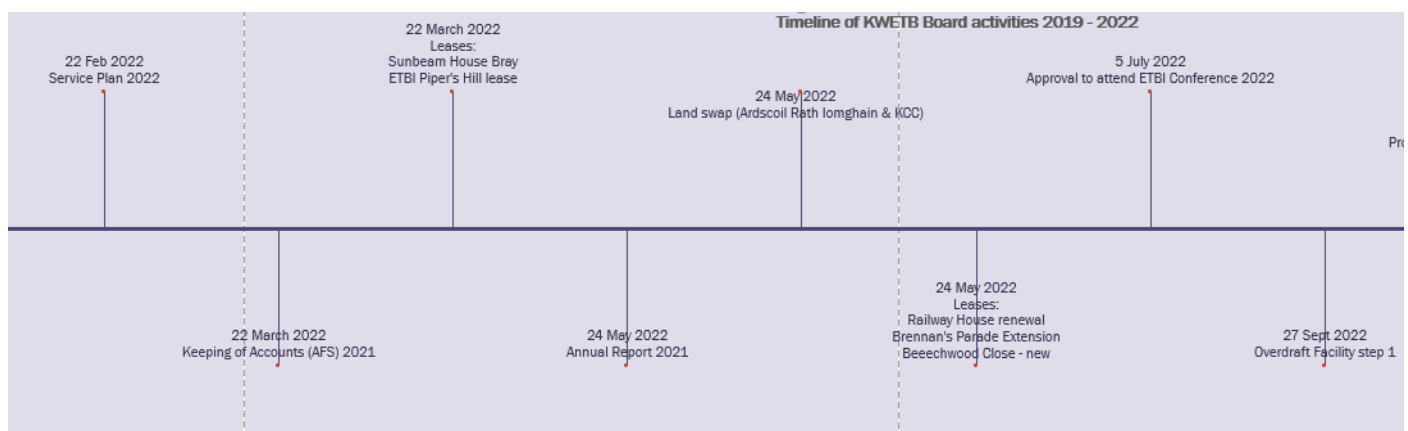
The Performance Delivery Agreement and Oversight agreement (PDA/OA) with the Department of Education is a performance contract in which an agreed level of service is formalised between the Department and KWETB. The agreement supports specific high-level goals and objectives and defines the output and 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 requires that KWETB also submit a quarterly ‘Early Warning Report’ to notify the department of any potential issues of concern. Furthermore, the Department of Education maintain oversight of reporting as part of the PDA which include formal quarterly review meetings, at which amongst other things, the submission of required reports is reviewed.

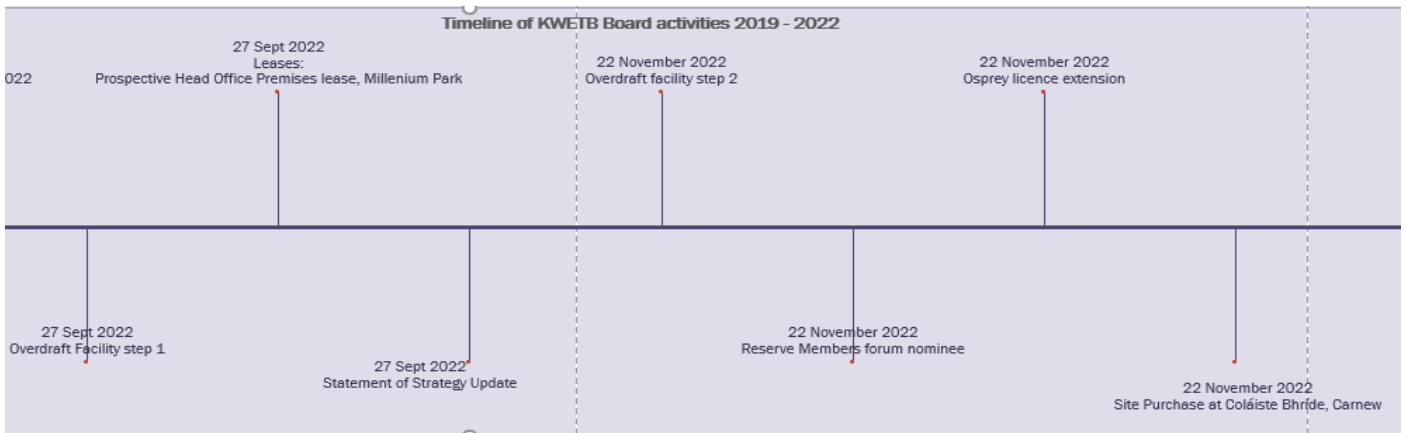
Board activities

The Board of KWETB met on 7 occasions in 2022 to fulfil its statutory requirements, referred to as the reserved functions of the ETB Act 2013. The statutory responsibilities completed by the Board in 2022 included adopting/approving;

- Service Plan 2022
- Draft Annual Financial Statements 2021
- Draft Statement of Internal Control 2021
- Annual Report 2021
- Attendance of members at ETBI Conference
- Continuation of overdraft facility
- Leasing arrangements
- Appointments to Board of Managements and/or committees of the Board

The introduction of a live timeline document to track the high-level approval and adoptions of the Board under their reserve functions was introduced in Q4 2022.





The Board of KWETB are supported in their role by the Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Committee.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee continues to operate effectively and consists of both Board members and externally appointed members who bring an array of expertise to the Committee and support the Board by examining and reporting on financial matters. The Finance Committee have a responsibility in the consideration of the Service Plan and its implementation and the approval of the draft Annual Financial Statements (AFS).

In 2022 the Finance Committee's activities included;

Annual Financial Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Draft Annual Financial Statements •Draft Statement of Internal Control •Report of Audit and Risk Committee •Assurances from Chief Executive •Letter of Representation to C&AG
Service Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Recommended approval of Service Plan 2022 •Oversee implementation of Service Plan throughout the year
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Monthly returns to the Department of Education •Payments in excess of €25,000 •Contracts Register •Leasing proposals
Other Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Report from Finance Officers Forum •Review of their own effectiveness •Relevant financial correspondence •Completed Committee Annual Report to Board for 2021 •Reviewed C&AG's special report on Financial management in ETBs

The Finance Committee met on 5 occasions in 2022, fulfilling the obligations under the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs to meet at least on 4 occasions, furthermore in accordance with both the ETB Act 2013 and Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs, a written report of the Committee was submitted to the Board after each meeting. The Chair of the Finance Committee who is also a member of the Board also provided a verbal report on the Committees activities. This structured reporting arrangement provides reassurance to the Board that the Finance Committee are completing their activities in line with their Terms of Reference and allow the Board to then make informed decisions regarding financial matters should it be required.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) have a particular role in supporting and advising the Board on matters in relation to risk, audit activity and internal control, and continue to play a highly effective and crucial role in supporting the Board. Similar to the Finance Committee, the ARC membership is composed of both Board members and external members who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in the areas of risk management and governance. Annually the ARC completes a significant work programme and in 2022 it included;



The ARC met on six occasions in 2022, fulfilling their obligations under the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs to meet at least on 4 occasions, to complete their substantial work programme, providing oversight, guidance and support to the Executive and assurance to the Board of KWETB. Along with written reports being submitted to the Board following a meeting of the ARC, in 2022 the practice of a

Board member who is also a member of the ARC reporting to the Board verbally at the meetings continued, adding further context and assurance of the committee's activities, effectiveness and supporting assurance of internal control throughout the year.

Board & committee member induction packs for new members

Two new members were appointed in 2022 to the Board of KWETB and one new external Committee member was appointed to the Finance Committee. Induction packs were created in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs and issued to members upon appointment with all relevant supporting information required to support them in their role on the Board / Committee. An induction presentation was provided to the new external finance committee member to brief them on their roles and responsibilities facilitated by the Corporate Governance and Compliance Officer and the Head of Finance.

Board support

The Board of KWETB conducted their business online since March 2020 and return to an in-person meeting in September 2022. Following research, demos and procurement of appropriate technology KWETB facilitated a successful hybrid Board meeting at the end of 2022. The Board have agreed a schedule for 2023 to include hybrid, in person and online meetings for 2023. It has been noted by members that on each platform effectiveness and efficiency of the Board in carrying out their reserved functions has been maintained.

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).

Activities of 2022 to enhance internal control in KWETB included;

Assurance enhancements

The process of providing assurance, in the first instance to ourselves, and subsequently senior management, the ARC and the Board was enhanced in 2022. In the OSD directorate, the continuation of the process whereby Assistant Principal Officers (APOs) provide written assurance, through the form of completed checklists, to the Director of OSD (DOSD) was completed. The assurances they provided for the area under their remit was broad and comprehensive, demonstrating active oversight of their area of responsibility. Subsequently the DOSD provided written assurance to the Chief Executive. Similarly, the Director of FET and Director of Schools provided written assurances to the Chief Executive for their directorate of responsibility. The Schools Directorate introduced a brief assurance exercise from Principals to the Director of Schools to support his assurance to the CE.

The Chief Executive then provided written and verbal assurance to the Audit and Risk Committee, the Finance Committee and the Board of KWETB, to support the finalisation of the draft Annual Financial Statements and signed of Statement of Internal Control. The practice of providing assurances will be further enhanced in 2023, demonstrating, responsibility, transparency and accountability.

Risk Management

As a key element of internal control, KWETB are committed to a robust and active risk management framework. Combined with the regular review of the Corporate Risk Register, reporting to the Board and ARC, the executive continues to review the process of risk management to identify and implement actions that best mitigate against identified risks. The ARC make a significant contribution to the development of risk management activities in KWETB through constructive and robust discussions. In 2022;

- The risk report was amended to include an executive summary to improve communication with committee/Board
- Introduction of verbal ARC report to Board
- Review and updating of Risk Management Policy (inline with Policy Management Framework)
- 6 risk ratings were reduced during the year following with the implementation of mitigating actions
- 2 new risks captured and 3 risks parked

Risk Appetite Statement

In 2022 the Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) was created via the Governance and Compliance Network. KWETB finalised their RAS following consultation with the ARC and the Director of OSD. The RAS is a useful decision-making tool to frame the ETBs response and capacity to risk.

As per the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs an RAS should be in situ. It is acknowledged the appetite of ETBs are limited and influenced by our activities as set out by our stakeholders, the Code states “.....in the case of an ETB, the setting of the Risk Appetite in respect of activities applies largely to Agency Programmes, Self-financing Projects and/or new school provision as in the case of core programmes the level of service to be provided, the programme rules and related funds are determined by the DES and/or by SOLAS and other programme funders”.

Policy Management Framework

The purpose of the Policy Management Framework (PMF) is to establish a protocol for the development, approval, communication and review of policies in KWETB, ensuring a consistent approach across the organisation. The establishment of such a framework not only reflects best practice and implements a structured approach to policy management but also satisfies a recommendation arising from the external review of the Corporate Governance Programme.

Following approval of the PMF in November 2021, the Governance and Compliance team carried out a review process of prioritising policies due for review commencing in April 2022 running throughout the course of the year. An induction session was held with management on implementing the PMF and a dedicated Intranet section was published to support and embed the PMF across the organisation. With the implementation of the PMF certain policies were prioritised for review. Two key governance policies; Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and the Risk Management Policy were reviewed and subsequently approved by SMT in 2022.

This review of policies derives from our strategic objectives under Corporate Governance specifically relating to Policy management including;

4.1.3 Further enhance and develop the KWETB governance framework to support best practice governance within KWETB.

4.1.5 Develop and implement an effective and efficient document management system and process.

The Corporate Governance and Compliance team intend to continue the review and updating of policies in collaboration and consultation with other departments throughout 2023.

Audit Activity

Not unlike previous years 2022 was busy in terms of audit, both from the Internal Audit Unit (IAU-ETBs) and external auditors. All recommendations of internal and external audit are captured and managed as part of the *Audit Register* which is presented on a formal basis bi-annually to the ARC. In 2022, 87% of audit recommendations received have been implemented.

Audit	Conducted by	Commenced	Audit Status
Local Training Initiatives	IAU-ETBs	November 2020	Opinion Report received (Dec 2022)
DEIS programme funding	IAU-ETBs	December 2020	Opinion report received (April 2022)
School Meals Programme	IAU-ETBs	August 2021	Opinion Report received (Dec 2022)
Youth Services	IAU-ETBs	November 2021	Opinion report awaited
Procurement/Capital Projects	IAU-ETBs	April 2020	Opinion report awaited
Audit of Financial Statements 2021	C&AG	November 2022	Opinion report awaited
Skills to Advance	IAU-ETBs	December 2022	Audit Ongoing

IAU-ETBs – Internal Audit Unit ETB

C&AG – Office of Comptroller and Auditor General

The above reflects the audit culture in which ETB's operate, while several ESF verification audits were also conducted.

2022 saw 3 ESF verification audits which the Corporate Governance and Compliance team tracked and created a new specific audit register for. This brings the ESF verifications in line with other KWETB audits for tracking implementation of recommendations and in monitoring trends and best practice.

In 2022, a management process for audit was established to improve the audit management and monitoring. This included a specific shared MS Team space for each audit where the information is shared with the internal auditor and a tracker is maintained for audit requests and information provided. This facilitates the monitoring of audit requests and information, enhancing the management of audit responses, and decreasing duplication of requests and information provided. All shared audit data is encouraged via this channel.

P2P & SUN -impact

KWETB saw the introduction of the Purchase to Pay (P2P) and Sun Financial Management System live from Friday 1st July 2022. KWETB were in the fourth wave of ETBs to introduce this system through Education Shared Business Services (ESBS).

The P2P system provides end to end payment processing facilities, interconnecting with the SUN Financial management system. The introduction of both improve the reporting capabilities and oversight of payments across the ETB.

Moreover, the implementation of this system was in direct correlation to the audit recommendations of managements letters from 2017-2019 from the Comptroller and Audit General (C&AG) relating to “Inadequate accounting and other IT Systems”. This relates to 10% of the recommendations from C&AG audits from 2017 – 2020, meaning 10% of these outstanding recommendations are now resolved with the introduction of SUN Financial Management System and P2P processes.

The implementation of the new systems will enhance reporting capabilities and create efficiencies and compliance across the financial management system.

Ethics in Public Office process

To further bolster our governance mechanisms the procedure surrounding the obligations of the Ethics Acts was reviewed and enhanced in 2022. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) created in 2021 was reviewed to incorporate learnings of the process in 2022 and improve efficiencies.

Annual report process

The Annual report was completed by the Corporate Governance and Compliance team this year taking a Statement of Strategy (SOS) driven approach. Following the first year of the strategy, the annual report was based upon both the SOS objectives and Service Plan objectives as set out at the beginning of 2021. This was supported by the SOS tracking functionality in place by enhancing the ease of information flow and gathering, to document and communicate KWETB’s achievements of 2021. The Annual report process was planned, managed and tracked using Microsoft Project software.

The Annual report for 2021 gave a visual emphasis on KWETB services and the communities we serve. It highlights the services enhanced within the year, new services provided in 2021 and achievements of each directorate. The Annual Report 2021, once laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas was published on KWETB’s website.

Dedicated Governance website/Intranet pages

The Governance team created content for both the public facing website and the Staff Intranet in 2021 and 2022. This content included governance activities such as Statutory reporting, Audit management, Internal Control, Risk Management and Policy Management. This highlights to both internal and external stakeholders the standard of governance upheld in KWETB and the mechanisms by which it is effectively managed and demonstrated. It provides assistance and guidance to our staff to enable, support and encourage them to achieve their governance requirements. The page can be viewed on our website under [Governance](#).

Governance Workshop

As per the Governance team objectives for 2022, and as part of the wider achievement of objectives outlined in the statement of strategy, a Governance and Risk Management workshop was provided to all OSD staff in Q4 2022. This is the first workshop ran internally in relation to governance and risk management and 80% attendance of OSD staff was achieved. Positive feedback was received following a survey of attendees. It is the team's intention to roll this out to FET administrative services such as the Training services team and FET Systems & supports in 2023.

Organisational Chart Management

The Corporate Governance team manage the organisational (org) chart of KWETB which is required at the outset of each audit and also illustrates our internal reporting channels. This information is essential in audit to identify decision makers and appropriate authority levels. The chart is finalised in consultation with management and reviewed regularly. There was also the introduction of an OSD Organisational chart in 2022 to capture the duties of staff teams in OSD. Both charts are created and updated via MS Application Visio. The corporate governance team will make any changes to both as advised by Directors and APOs.

Other governance support provided

Corporate Governance Programme Reflection

To reflect upon the Corporate Governance Programme actions that arose and determine their status in today's operational environment. It further allowed the opportunity to reemphasize governance and the exceptional outputs of the CGP, documenting progress made following official completion and sign-off the programme.

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act Research

The Corporate Governance and Compliance team analysed guidance received from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) on implementing the duty to establish the ETB's obligations under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act. Following research, we presented on the basis of the public duty, obligations on the ETB and possible solutions in both short and long term addressing the duty. The pack of documents we collated was shared with a staff member designated to progress this implementation. We set the scene and facilitated understanding of the concept of public duty for the initial introduction of IHREC Act to KWETB's compliance.

School Completion Programme (SCP) governance

In collaboration with our colleagues, clarification on the role of the ETB in the oversight of SCP was received. Continued support and clarity of roles and responsibilities of the ETB in terms of SCP activities will be provided in 2023.

FET Co-ordinator engagement

The Governance and Compliance team attended a meeting of the FET Kildare Co-ordinators at the request of the AEO to provide a high-level overview of governance activities, importance of policies and an introduction to supports that can be provided to co-ordinators to assist them in achieving their governance standards. This was an extremely information session with areas identified that the team can provide specific support in 2023, such as adherence to operating guidelines.