

Minutes of the National Oversight & Audit Commission (NOAC) meeting
Tuesday 16th of December 2014

Venue: Offices of the LGMA, Local Government House, 35-39 Usher's Quay, Dublin 8

Attended by:

Chairman	Pat McLoughlin
Members	Kevin Baneham
	John Buckley
	Tara Buckley
	Garrett Fennell
	Connie Hanniffy
	Paul Lemass
	Martina Moloney
	Padraig McNally
	Micheál Nolan
	Colleen Savage

Secretariat	Sheila McMahon
	Declan Grehan

Absent	Henry Upton
--------	-------------

Minutes of meeting of 28/10/2014

The minutes of the meeting of 28/10/2014 were agreed without amendment. The secretariat reminded the meeting that signed copies of the Code of Business Conduct approved at the previous meeting were still outstanding from some members. The Chairman and members had a brief discussion in relation to the workshop that followed on from that meeting, facilitated by Seán Ó Riordáin on 25/11/2014, and agreed it had been very worthwhile.

NOAC Draft Statement of Strategic Intent

The members considered in some detail the draft of the Statement of Strategic Intent which had been substantially revised on foot of the workshop discussion. The meeting debated and agreed the content section by section and the Secretariat is to circulate the revised document by email for final review and clearance by the members.

NOAC Draft Work Plan for 2015/2016

There was a detailed discussion of the draft work plan and it was agreed that the included items should be grouped into three categories – Organisational, Approach to Review and Specific Actions. The item relating to the LGAS VFM Unit was amended to provide for agreement of the Unit's programme of work and scrutiny of its reports. The possible role

that NOAC might have in respect of the application of the Public Spending Code to local authorities, which is under discussion between D/ECLG and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (D/PER), was briefly discussed. It was agreed that when this is determined, NOAC will require guidance as to what exactly would be expected of it and will have to examine the implications for its other functions and resources. On the item relating to the local government efficiency reforms, the point was made that the LGMA's Programme Management Office (PMO) is overseen by a high level Oversight Group and NOAC should not be duplicating any work that has already been carried out. On the other hand, a look-back at some of the decisions taken by the PMO would have the benefit of either confirming that the Office's work was on track or bringing to light any serious points of concern, if any existed. Some of the reforms recommended by the Local Government Efficiency Review Group that have not advanced might be due to a lack of a change management culture rather than the merits of the proposal. External expertise might be required to properly assess the process used in deciding whether to accept a business case and to evaluate the results of implemented reforms. It was agreed that the PMO should be asked for a report on the various LGER projects and the associated savings and that NOAC should enquire of the PMO how comprehensive was the evaluation and what was included in the costings of the projects that it was decided not to advance.

Performance Indicators Sub-Group

The report of the work of the sub-group was accepted by the Commission, which agreed that the sub-group's list of recommended performance indicators for the report of 2014 local authority activity should be conveyed to the LGMA, apart from the first Finance indicator.

It will be a matter for the LGMA to advise if any of the new indicators would be incapable of being supplied retrospectively in respect of 2014 but they should all be reported on for 2015 and any indicators developed from the thematic reviews will apply in respect of 2016 activity at the earliest.

Housing Review Sub-Group

The members agreed that the areas so far identified for detailed review by the sub-group, viz. social housing assessment, allocation and maintenance/management, private rented sector inspections and delivery of overall housing supply, should be proceeded with and the sub-group should continue now to develop scoping papers for each area of study.

Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman indicated that due to other commitments he could not be sure at the moment as to his availability for the next 6 months. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 3rd February at 9.00 a.m. and that when his availability is clarified in the next few weeks, the Chairman will circulate a list of suggested future meeting dates for the members' consideration.

Amárach Customer Survey Presentation

Eleanor O'Dwyer-Duggan and Sarah Rooney of Amárach joined the meeting to give a presentation of the findings of the local authority customer engagement survey commissioned by NOAC. This was an online survey of 1,001 people on their representative panel which gives an outcome that X% of the Irish population think Y and with weighting of the data results to correct minor errors. The survey measures unprompted and prompted awareness of local authority activities.

Amárach will provide the data file with the full survey results. They indicated that it would be possible to have the data recut by those who are aware at a prompted level of the work of the LAs and by those who have availed in any capacity of the services, with the caveat that the samples might not be very robust when further broken down.

In the discussion after the presentation, it was agreed that the Customer Survey sub-group would review the survey data in more detail and take it into account when deciding the questions that should be put to respondents in the planned customer satisfaction survey to be undertaken in 2015.