

NOAC – National Oversight and Audit Commission Local Authorities – Report on Performance Indicators 2016

The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) today (25 January 2018) published its report on **Performance Indicators in Local Authorities 2016**.

This is the third annual performance indicators report published by NOAC and outlines the activity in 2016 of local authorities in respect of a set of 32 performance indicators prescribed by NOAC. The indicators cover a wide range of the functions carried out by local authorities in the areas of Housing (4), Roads (3), Water (1), Economic Development (3), Planning (5), Waste/Environment (3), Fire Service (3), Library/Recreation (2), Youth/Community (2), Corporate (4) and Finance (2). The data for the report was collected from local authorities by the Local Government Management Agency on NOAC's behalf.

As well as the indicator details for each of the 31 local authorities, the report contains NOAC's analysis of the 2016 performance outcomes. It also sets out details of the quality assurance review NOAC undertook of five of the indicators by visiting six of the local authorities and highlights key messages and conclusions emerging from the data. The report is available here:

<http://noac.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2016-PI-Report.pdf>

Pat McLoughlin, NOAC's Chairman, said: "This report outlines local authority performance across a small selection of their many functions. I hope all the local authorities will review their comparative data against other authorities of a similar profile to identify any opportunities for improving their performance in these functional areas."

In terms of the overall national indicator data:

Housing

- 3% of local authority houses were vacant at the end of 2016, compared to 3.5% at end 2015 and 3.8% at end 2014, and 15 local authorities had a vacancy rate of less than 2%
- the average house re-letting time had increased to 33 weeks, but impacting on that figure are an increasing number of long-term voids being returned to occupation using the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's Vacant Properties (Voids) Programme
- 10,206 inspected rented dwellings in 2016 were not compliant with the Standards Regulations and 5,101 became compliant during the year
- at the end of 2016, there were 4,186 homeless adults in emergency accommodation, an increase of 19% on the number at end 2015

Roads

- by the end of 2016, 98% of regional roads had received a Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) rating and 70% had surface or structural defects
- Monaghan had the highest proportion of its regional roads in both the worst condition category (15%) and in the best category (51%)
- 10% or more of roads were structurally distressed in the case of 12 local authorities for local primary roads, 18 authorities for local secondary roads and 19 authorities for local tertiary roads
- 1,429km of local roads were strengthened in 2016 using €100.5m in Improvement Grants and 1,719km of local roads were resealed using €29.3m of Maintenance Grants
- since 2012, the proportion of motor tax transactions conducted online has increased by almost 20 percentage points to 70.14%

Water

- for the third year running, private drinking water supplies in Co. Westmeath achieved a 100% compliance rate with the Drinking Water Regulations
- overall compliance of private drinking water supplies was 97.77%, a very slight dis-improvement on the previous year

Economic Development

- in 2016, businesses assisted by Local Enterprise Offices created 3,355 jobs, there were 7,564 participants in the mentoring scheme and the LEOs approved 1,141 trading online vouchers in respect of small businesses

Planning

- there was a 37% increase in the number of new buildings notified to local authorities in 2016 and a quarter of these new buildings were inspected
- the average per capita cost of the planning service rose fractionally to €26.96, with Cavan having the lowest cost for the third year at €15.25

Litter

- Leitrim and Laois had no areas of moderate, significant or gross litter pollution in 2016
- just over half of the monitored authorities increased the litter free portion of their counties

Fire Service

- calls to attend fires reduced by 4% and other emergency call-outs increased by 10% in 2016 over the previous year
- of the part-time brigades Sligo had the quickest mobilisation time for fires and other incidents

Library Service

- there were 17.18m visits to libraries and 18.17m items borrowed in 2016
- the number of visits per head of population ranged from 6.2 in Cork City to 1.84 in Louth

Corporate

- for the first time since end 2008, there was an increase in the whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff employed by the local authority sector at end 2016 – the increase was 289 WTE or 1%
- despite this, staff numbers reduced in 9 authorities: Dublin City, Carlow, Cork County, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, Waterford and Westmeath
- total medically certified paid sick leave for all authorities increased to 3.76% of working days – the paid sick leave rate was greater than 3.5% in the case of 21 authorities, but the rate in Westmeath was only 1.68%
- total page views of all local authority websites in 2016 were 59m and total social media users/followers were 1.16m

Finance

- Clare, Kilkenny and Louth cleared their Revenue Account deficits in 2016, leaving 13 authorities in deficit at the end of the year – 12 of these, however, reduced their deficits
- Meath had the lowest per capita expenditure at €522 and Dublin City had the highest at €1,388, which may be related to the provision of services to a high number of non-residents
- all local authorities increased their rates collection performance in 2016, apart from two that already had a very high collection rate

◦ Tipperary collected 97% of housing rents and Fingal collected 100% of housing loan repayments in 2016

The detailed results for each indicator are provided in Tables 1 to 27 on pages 27 to 78. The Local Government Management Agency commentary is at pages 79-97.

The two previous Performance Indicators Reports published by NOAC included indicators relating to changes to the social housing stock. When this report had been compiled, issues emerged in relation to the accuracy of the data supplied for these indicators that resulted in its later publication and the omission of this data. “In light of the issues that arose with this report and with the objective of aligning with the priorities identified in Rebuilding Ireland, a review of the housing stock indicators for the 2017 report is being carried out” added Pat McLoughlin.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

NOAC (the National Oversight and Audit Commission) was established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to provide independent scrutiny of local government performance in fulfilling national, regional and local mandates. One of its functions is to scrutinise performance of local government bodies against relevant indicators and this is the third annual performance indicator report published by NOAC in relation to that function.

Since its establishment, NOAC has examined a range of areas of local authority activity, resulting in the publication of 12 reports to date, including most recently *A Review of the Management and Maintenance of Local Authority Housing* (NOAC Report No. 12). For further information on NOAC, including all reports published to date, see www.noac.ie.

Queries to NOAC via DHPLG Press Office: Tel: (01) 888 2638 (direct), (01) 888 2000;
E-Mail: Press@housing.gov.ie Web site: www.noac.ie