

**Minutes of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Meeting  
Tuesday 16 April 2019 at 10.00 am**

Venue: Conference Room, Custom House, Dublin 1

Attended by:

Chairman Michael McCarthy  
Members Martina Moloney  
Constance Hanniffy  
Sharon O'Connor  
Michael McGreal  
Tara Buckley

Secretariat: Claire Gavin  
Neill Dalton  
Colin Flood

Apologies: Paul Lemass  
Dave Holohan  
John Buckley  
Colleen Savage

Donegal County Council attended from 11.00:

Seamus Neely - Chief Executive  
Richard Gibson - Head of Finance

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed by the members. A member queried why the three recently published reports by LGAS on VFM were not on the agenda as this was recorded in the minutes of the meeting on 5 March 2019. The Secretariat advised that the Head of Local Government Audit Service would be attending the next meeting and the 3 VFM reports would be on the agenda for that meeting.

Minutes of Meetings with Tipperary County Council

The minutes of the meeting were agreed by the members.

Minutes of Meetings with Roscommon County Council

The minutes of the meeting were agreed subject to amendments requested by a member of NOAC.

Declaration of any conflicts of interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest from the Board.

Training/brain storming session

The Secretariat asked the Board for more information on what form the training/ brain storming session should take. It was agreed that the Board would like to use the event to realign their priorities, review the leadership and structure of the sub groups, reflect on the fulfilment of NOAC's remit and appraise their relationship with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (D/HPLG). The Board confirmed the facilitator should have experience in the Local Government sector but are not currently connected to it. The Secretariat asked that the Board submit a list of preferred names of facilitators. The board expressed an interest in having

presentations at the event from journalists and/or academics with an interest and knowledge in Local Government. It was also agreed to contact the LGMA to see if they can recommend an independent facilitator.

#### Annual Report

The Chair confirmed the 2018 Annual Report was now finalised and will issue to the Minister.

#### Healthy & Positive Ageing Initiative

The Chair confirmed the Secretariat had accepted a meeting with Age Friendly Ireland and advised that Age Friendly Ireland may make a formal submission re Performance Indicators and request time at a meeting to present to the full NOAC board.

#### Secretariat Changes

The Board were advised that Lisa Clifford is leaving the Secretariat. The board wished it known that Lisa has brought great value to NOAC since she joined, that she is an excellent person to work with and that NOAC wish her well in her future endeavours.

The Board agreed that the loss of staff from the Secretariat has come at a crucial time and highlights the importance of the relationship between NOAC and the D/HPLG. It was agreed that the role of Principal Officer (PO) in NOAC's Secretariat needs to be a stable one. The board noted that the current system was unstable and unsatisfactory. It was also noted that this view had previously been expressed to the D/HPLG. It was suggested that the Chair have an input into the experience and knowledge of the incoming PO or alternatively the Secretariat function be outsourced but it was confirmed that these were not possible. The Board agreed to send a note to the Secretary General highlight their concerns in the matter.

#### Redesigned logo for NOAC

The Secretariat advised the Board that the design of a logo for NOAC has not progressed and reminded the board that this process was initiated previously but no decision was made by the board to progress the matter further. It was agreed that the Secretariat would seek assistance from staff in the D/HPLG. The Board advised that the logo should be simple, serious, and straight forward with sombre colours and authoritative lettering. The Secretariat agreed to have proposals available for the next meeting.

#### Performance Indicator Update

The Board were advised that closing date for local authorities to input their data into LGRReturns is 26 April 2019. A reminder of the closing date was issued to all local authorities. At present circa 30% of the required data has been input together with the bulk of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party data. The Secretariat have answered 53 queries on the interpretation of the guidelines and issued a number of small revisions to the guidelines. The 2018 performance indicator report will include a trend analysis that covers the 5 years of performance indicators collected for 5 specific indicators since NOAC was established in 2014.

The sub group are considering a change to the waster indicator from 2019 to include the number of tests carried out.

It also advised that they wished to assess the visibility of adding a new indicator focused on Economic Development. The NOAC Board agreed in principle to engage external researchers in the development of the new indicator. The sub group will review the scope of work for the next NOAC meeting. The Board advised that it is important to engage with the sector, along with academics to

ensure that the new indicator is practical and worthwhile. The members agreed the proposal for external assistance and funding for same.

It was noted that Cork City / County boundary changes will impact the 2019 report.

It was confirmed that the subgroup met with the LGMA on 5 March 2019 and the LGMA committed to preparing a submission for new indicators around tourism and climate change.

#### Code of Corporate Governance for Local Authorities

A working group has been set to advance work in the area of Code of Corporate Governance for Local Authorities and Statement of Internal Controls. A document was circulated to the Board outlining the proposal, the actions required and invitation for NOAC to install a representative on the Board. A discussion was had on the practicality of having a NOAC member or member of the NOAC Secretariat on the working group. While NOAC supports the oversight outlined in the proposal, the Board agreed that it should have a consulting role rather than a full member/ contributor. It was decided that the motion will be deferred to the next NOAC meeting to bring in absent members into the decision.

#### AOB

It was confirmed that the Customer Survey sub group would meet on 30<sup>th</sup> of April and that the next Board meeting would take place on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May

#### Meeting with Donegal County Council at 11.00am

The Chief Executive and Head of Finance of Donegal County Council attended the meeting.

A separate note on this engagement will be prepared and provided to Donegal County Council in the context of NOAC's local authority profiling exercise.

The Donegal County Council profile meeting discussed and questioned a wide range of topics from housing, performance indicators and economic development. The Chair then thanked the Chief Executive and his team for attending and providing valuable insight into the work of the Council.