

**Draft Minutes of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Meeting
Tuesday 10th July 2018**

Venue: Withdrawing Room, Custom House, Dublin 1

Attended by:

Chairman Pat McLoughlin
Members Tara Buckley
 Paul Lemass
 Dave Holohan
 Colleen Savage
 Sharon O'Connor
 Michael McGreal
 Martina Maloney
 Constance Hanniffy

Michael McCarthy (NOAC Chair designate) attended at the invitation of the Board.
Apologies from John Buckley

Secretariat Lisa Clifford
 Claire Gavin
 Ken Doyle

Meeting of NOAC in absence of Secretariat

A meeting of NOAC took place in absence of the Secretariat; the Chair will circulate a note of the issues discussed and the action points arising.

Appointment of new Chair

The new Chair designate of NOAC attended the meeting at the Boards request and was introduced to the members. The process for formally appointing a new Chair was outlined to the Board.

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were presented and agreed subject to some minor amendments.

Declaration of any conflicts of interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest from the members. On a point of information Sharon O'Connor informed the meeting that she is expecting to be appointed to the Accounts Commission for Scotland; this is a complementary role as the work of the Commission is similar to the work of NOAC.

Internal Audit Report

The Chair welcomed the finalised report on the Internal Audit Function in Local Authorities; the report is comprehensive and generally positive but it also identifies some of the gaps that exist in the local authority internal audit function. In particular the Chair noted the variance

that still exists in the regularity of internal audit committee meetings. There was also discussion on the type of follow up that NOAC should put in place to track the implementation of recommendations made in the report. The report is to be issued to both the Chief Executives (CE's) and the Audit Committee of each local authority and the Secretary General of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. As part of the follow-up process a meeting will be scheduled with the Director of the Local Government Audit Service to discuss the recommendations with a view to including the recommendations as part of future audits. In addition NOAC will review the internal audit function again in 2 /3 years, to assess the level of implementation of recommendation made.

Customer Survey Project and Report

Hazel Scully from IPSOS attended to present the report. It was acknowledged that the report was a good piece of work and gives an insight into how local authorities are viewed by their customers. The overall message coming from the report is positive but that local authorities need, in particular, to improve their communications using all the tools at their disposal to inform citizens of the work being done by their councils.

The Report was adopted for publication. The report is to be circulated to CE's, the LGMA and CCMA for information purposes in advance of publication in the week commencing 16th July.

Follow up letter to Minister on Coroners VFM Report

The draft letter to issue to the Minister suggesting recommendations following the VFM report was approved subject to a minor change.

Meeting dates for next meetings

The dates for the next Board meetings were agreed. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 18th September, followed by a meeting on 23rd October with the final meeting of 2018 to be held on either 27th November or 4th December.

Sub Committee work programme

A discussion was held on work areas that should be undertaken as part of the subcommittee work programmes. A list of suggestions from the Chairs of each subcommittee was circulated to members. It was agreed that the list would be circulated to the members by way of a survey for them to select the two top priority items from this list for action.

NOAC Profile Visits

It was agreed that the next local authorities to be invited for profile meetings would be the authorities visited as part of the performance indicator validation visits and Roscommon and Donegal. A lot of the preparatory work involved for the local authority was completed as part of the validation visit.

It was agreed that, if possible, one local authority would attend each of the next three NOAC meetings. An invitation would issue to each of the eight counties to arrange a schedule for attendance at the next three meetings.

NOAC Logo and Single Government Identity

The Board agreed that NOAC would seek to create it's own independent identity outside the Government of Ireland (GoI) branding and that the Department should be notified of this decision accordingly. In response to the Department's request for views in the matter the

Secretariat will prepare a reply setting out the Board's decision and the reasons for that decision including:

- the use of the single government identity would be inappropriate for NOAC. Notwithstanding NOAC being a national body, the functions of NOAC are directed towards oversight of local government and to identify as a GoI body might detract from that purpose and the identity of NOAC as a local government oversight body,
- in that context other local government bodies have created their own identity to show separation from central government; this should be mirrored by NOAC;
- tNOAC publishes reports in its own right, independent of any government department, therefore using the GoI identity could be seen to remove this independence, and
- if other state bodies and non-commercial semi-states do not use the branding then NOAC should also be excluded from the requirement.

NOAC would, in the event that it is deemed not acceptable to not use the GOI branding, consider using a joint identity i.e. joint a NOAC and GoI logo. A decision on the development of a NOAC logo will be taken after central government makes its decision on whether state bodies will be required to use the single government identity.

2017 Performance Indicator (PI) Report update

An update was given on progress in respect of the Performance Indicator Report 2017. The site visits to local authorities for the validation of the performance indicator data have been completed and considered by the subcommittee to have been successful. The local authorities visited are using the PI data to monitor performance and to improve service provision.

The 2017 report is to be drafted and circulated in advance of the next NOAC meeting for decision to publish.

Good Practice Event 2017

The LGMA have agreed to conduct a survey on the benefits of the Good Practice event held in November 2017. The survey will be conducted in July and results will be available by the end of July.