

Third and final Local Authority Satisfaction Survey released by the National Oversight and Audit Commission

2020 survey looks at satisfaction levels across Carlow, Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath, Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo, Cavan and Monaghan

2nd September 2020: The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) today published its findings for the Local Authority Satisfaction Survey 2020, and separately a summary infographic report of three annual surveys across all Local Councils carried out since 2018.

The NOAC independently oversees the local government sector by reviewing the performance of local Councils, monitoring implementation of national local government policy and identifying opportunities for best practice.

The 2020 survey of over 1,000 citizens, was conducted in February/March by IPSOS MRBI. It is the final annual survey following 2018 and 2019* surveys (see counties covered in Note to Editors) which measured satisfaction in the largest and medium sized local authorities, respectively. This year's survey covered the ten smallest local authorities Carlow, Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath, Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo, Cavan and Monaghan. Overall, over 3,200 citizens have participated in face to face interviews in the 3 year process.

The national picture from the three annual surveys, illustrated in the summary infographic report shows:

- an average of 57% of those surveyed were satisfied with their local Council. Respondents in the smaller local authorities, surveyed in 2020 were the most satisfied at 59% whilst in 2019 and 2018, respectively, satisfaction levels were at 58% and 53%.
- on average just over half (52%) believe their Council is doing a good job with responses in 2020 highest at 55% compared to 54% in 2019 and 47% in 2018.
- At least 6 in 10 citizens believe their local council is making a positive contribution to the quality of life in their area. Work done by Councils to make areas cleaner, greener and safer get most recognition.
- 53% of respondents believe their Council promotes economic activity. This was agreed by 57% of those surveyed in 2020, 55% of those surveyed in 2019 and 48% of those surveyed in 2018.
- 42% stated that they were well informed by their local Council. This was highest in 2020 amongst smaller local authorities at 48% and at 41% and 38% in 2019 and 2018 respectively.
- Over one third (36%) believe their council is open and transparent, with smaller local authorities stronger on this at 41%, with 2019's survey at 39% and 2018's survey at 29%.
- 29% said that their local Council provides good value for money. In 2020 this figure was 29% whilst in 2019 this stood at 30% and in 2018 at 27%

Michael McCarthy, Chairperson of NOAC said; *"a key NOAC function is to review performance and encourage positive improvements in local government services. This series of surveys gives an excellent snapshot of how citizens across Ireland view their local Councils. Each year, we share these results with Councils and encourage them to seek improvement in how they interact with citizens. For the past 3 years NOAC has held excellent Customer Service Workshops at which presentations of many good initiatives developed and implemented by local authority staff were shared"*.

Key findings from the 2020 Local Authority Satisfaction Survey of the ten smaller Councils found that:

- Overall satisfaction with councils in 2020 was at 59% whilst Sligo topped the list at 68%.
- Satisfaction with road safety and road maintenance was higher across Councils surveyed in 2020 at 74% and 65% respectively. Westmeath polled the highest in this category at 88% and 84% respectively.
- Over half of those surveyed believe their Council is doing a good job, both Westmeath (71%) and Sligo (68%) polled above average in this category.
- 48% of respondents feel informed by their Council, this was most prevalent in Westmeath where almost 7 in 10 surveyed agreed with this.
- 29% of respondents think that their Council provides good value for money. Offaly was above average in this category at 41%.
- 39% surveyed were satisfied with affordable housing services provided by their local authority. Roscommon was above average in this category at 50%.
- Over a third of those surveyed (36%) had contacted their Council in the past five years. Contact with Councils was highest in Laois (45%) and in Roscommon (42%).
- 6 in 10 people contacted their local authority in person when surveyed in February/March prior to Covid-19 restrictions.

Michael McCarthy, Chairperson of NOAC stated that: *“the survey of smaller Councils demonstrates that these councils tend to score higher satisfaction than larger authorities. This is probably due to greater recognition of the work of local Councils and the impact they have on daily lives of citizens, especially in more rural areas.*

On average, the Councils surveyed this year scored very strongly on their work to make local areas cleaner and greener, with recognition from three quarters of citizens for this activity. The survey also suggests that Councils could do more to communicate how their resources are spent in the interests of residents.”

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The 2020 report is available to download [here](#)

and a summary infographic of surveys over the past three years is available [here](#)

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All NOAC reports can be found at: <http://noac.ie/noac-reports/>

About the National Oversight and Audit Commission:

The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) was established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to provide independent scrutiny of local government performance in fulfilling

national, regional and local mandates, including performance in respect of financial resources. Its mission is to independently oversee the local government sector by reviewing the financial and operational performance of bodies within its remit, overseeing implementation of national local government policy and identifying opportunities for best practice. Since its establishment, NOAC has examined a range of areas of local authority activity, resulting in preparation and publication of 25 reports to date.

Councils surveyed previously

The 2018 Local Authority Satisfaction Survey surveyed: Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin, Cork County, Limerick, Galway County, Kildare, Meath and Tipperary.

The 2019 Local Authority Satisfaction Survey surveyed: Kilkenny, Louth, Wexford, Wicklow, Clare, Cork City, Kerry, Waterford City and County, Galway City, Mayo and Donegal.