

Report finds 2019 performance of Westmeath County Council was mixed

- Independent oversight body identified several areas of improvement and concern across Ireland's local government sector –

17 December 2020: A report by the independent watchdog of local government has revealed the performance of Westmeath County Council in 2019 across eleven areas. The annual report, by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC), found the Council delivered mixed results in a range of areas including housing, the environment and financial management.

Some of the key findings in the report include:

- **Housing:** Westmeath County Council owned 1,978 social housing dwellings at end of 2019 with 1.87% vacant. The average time for rehousing in vacant properties was 15 weeks.
- **Finance:** The level of collection of commercial rates was 85% and the level of housing loans collection was 99%.
- **Environment:** 10% of the Council's area is unpolluted or litter-free while energy savings made since 2009 is 19%.
- **Fire service:** Attendance at the scene in respect of fire within 10 minutes was 29%, and 61% within 20 minutes.
- **Public Libraries:** There were an average of 3.38 visits per head of population and 242,203 items issued to library borrowers in 2019.

Commenting on the publication of the report, Chairman of NOAC, Michael McCarthy, said: "This report highlights some of the important work our local authorities carry out each year. We would encourage all local authorities and public representatives to review the report to learn ways they can continue to help local communities thrive. Local government plays in an important role in people's lives and as we look beyond the pandemic, NOAC is looking forward to working with all stakeholders to build on this work."

Michael McCarthy concluded by thanking local authority staff, the LGMA, and all organisations who provided or reviewed data for NOAC's 2019 Annual Report.

The NOAC uses 39 indicators across eleven areas to measure local authority performance. The data is submitted by the local authorities and other State and regulatory bodies.

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Note: The full report can be downloaded from the NOAC website [here](#) and an address by Michael McCarthy can be viewed [here](#).

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About the NOAC

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 fifth 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 22 reports to date. For further information on NOAC, including all reports published to date, see www.noac.ie