



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
Minutes of the Meeting – Tuesday 23 February 2021 at 11am

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Meeting Platform

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members: Martina Moloney Constance Hanniffy
Brian Cawley Niall Quinn
Mary Hurley

Secretariat: John McCarthy Claire Gavin
John Goldrick Colin Flood
Darren Browne

Apologies: Margaret Lane Neill Dalton

1. Minutes & actions of previous meeting;

The minutes of the following previous meetings were agreed:

- Updated minutes of meeting with the Local Government Audit Service – 16 December 2020;
- Draft Minutes of meeting with Limerick City and County - 19 January 2021
- Minutes of main NOAC meeting – 19 January 2021;

The minutes of the meeting with Limerick City and County will be circulated to them for comment.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest;

No conflicts of interest were raised.

3. Matters Arising;

There were no matters arising.

4. NOAC Corporate Affairs;

(a). NOAC Membership:

A campaign for an additional Board Members by the Public Appointments Service closed in January with nominees forwarded to the panel for deliberation.

(b). NOAC/Department SLA/PDA:

The NOAC/Department Performance Delivery Agreement has been circulated to the Board setting out the broad relationship between NOAC and the Department. This agreement has been agreed by the Department, the Board and the Secretariat and will be made available on the SharePoint site.

5. Working Group/Work Programme Review;

Since the last NOAC meeting, Working Groups 1, 2, and 4 have held meetings with WG3 to hold a meeting on 24 February. Further meetings of these WGs have been agreed. Following deliberations amongst the WGs, further amendments may be required to the 2021 Work Programme to reflect the work that may be achievable. The Secretariat will prepare an update for the next NOAC meeting.

6. Work Programme;

a) Chair;

A Scrutiny Programme Report has been prepared covering the Stage 1 and 2 meetings with local authorities for the period 2017-2020. This report includes records of the Stage 1 and 2 meeting minutes, local authority profiles, presentations and recommendations based on 2020 material. The report was agreed by the Board. The report will be desktop published and circulated before being released.

b) WG1 – Local Government Governance, Efficiency & Reform (LGGER);

Following a meeting on 9 February, Brian Cawley was selected as new WG1 Chair. As previously agreed by the board, the review of local authority ICT strategy has been reassigned from WG1 to WG3. Subject to this, the WG agreed their revised Terms of Reference.

The WG Chair provided an update on the following actions:

Review of Corporate Plans 2015-2019:

In 2020, the WG invited local authorities to provide an update on the progress of their Corporate Plans for 2015-2019. The Secretariat experienced some difficulty in collating the information returned as responses to the questionnaire varied amongst the local authorities. Overall the summary information will be useful when engaging with the local authorities.

Review of Corporate Plans 2020-2024:

The WG have enquired with the CCMA to find out if a review of the Corporate Plans 2020-2024 has already taken place to date. The WG have agreed to invite the head of their local government governance division to a WG meeting to discuss the progress of these plans.

Regional Assemblies:

The WG has agreed to review the Corporate Plans of the Regional Assemblies.

Local Enterprise Offices:

In January, the NOAC Chair and Secretariat held a meeting with An Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment to discuss the Local Enterprise Offices. Following on from this, the WG agreed to contact D/E TE to determine the status of the Review of Service Level Agreements with the LEOs.

Risk Assessment of Local Authorities:

The WG will enquire about the work of the LGAS in this area to determine how the WG will progress. It was suggested that NOAC could undertake a risk assessment of itself. Further discussion will be held on this matter.

The next WG1 meeting is scheduled for 19 March.

c) WG2 – Performance Indicators;

The WG held a meeting on 27 January. The WG worked through the amendments required for the guidelines for the 2020 Local Authority Performance Indicators Report and discussed how best to report on the impact of Covid-19. The 2020 Local Authority Performance Indicators Report workshop was held remotely on 15 February. Presentations were made by the WG Chair, the Secretariat, and the LGMA. The material from which will be made available on the NOAC website in the next few days. The WG Chair expressed her appreciation for the contribution towards the workshop by the Secretariat. A separate workshop will be held covering the 'Housing' indicators.

The working group held an initial discussion on the performance indicator actions under the Multi-Annual Work Programme. The Secretariat will revert to the WG with suggestions on prioritising work and moving actions forward.

Sean O'Riordain and Associates are preparing a final iteration of the 'economic development' indicators report which will be circulated to the full NOAC Board ahead of the next NOAC meeting.

d) WG4 – Financial Management and Performance;

The WG held a meeting on the 10 February. Margaret Lane was appointed WG Chair and the WG Terms of Reference were accepted. Going forward, the WG agreed to prioritise and finalise reports on Payroll Shared Services and on Unsecured Loans. Following this, the WG will examine Local Authority procurement processes, external Service Level Agreements and reviewing audit query findings.

It is planned to engage with the Institute of Public Administration to arrange a workshop to bring together local authority audit committees. It was suggested that all WGs could be involved in this workshop to understand the issues the audit committees may be facing and what support NOAC could offer.

The Secretariat plans to issue the guidance for the 2020 Public Spending Code Report in the next 2 weeks.

7. Document Control Sheet:

A template Document Control Sheet has been circulated to the Board. This would accompany reports and will help manage report versions and Board 'sign-offs'. The template document received Board approval.

8. Update on engagements and meetings with other bodies/organisations:

The Chair and Secretariat met with the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath, in December and discussed NOAC's activity and the impacts of Covid-19 on local authority finances. It was agreed that representatives of DPER would meet with the NOAC Board which led to the earlier meeting with Garrett O'Rorke of the Housing, Local Government & Heritage Vote Team. The Board felt it was a useful meeting to help inform them of financial issues faced by local authorities and the supports provided by the State.

9. Future Meetings:

The next NOAC meetings are currently scheduled for:

- 23 March 2021
- 27 April 2021

10. Any Other Business:

No other business was raised.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Action	Decision
1.	Meeting Minutes	The minutes of the previous meetings were agreed. The minutes of the meeting with Limerick City and County will be circulated to them for comment.
4 (b).	NOAC/Department SLA/PDA	Will be made available on the NOAC SharePoint site.
5.	Working Group/Work Programme Review	The Secretariat will prepare an update for the next NOAC meeting to reflect any amendments.
6 (a).	Scrutiny Programme Report	The report was agreed by the Board and will be desktop published before being released.
6 (b).	WG1 – Review of Corporate Plans 2020-2024	The WG have agreed to invite the head of their local government governance division to a WG meeting to discuss the progress of these plans.
6 (b).	WG1 - Local Enterprise Offices:	WG agreed to contact D/ETE to determine the status of the Review of Service Level Agreements with the LEOs.
6 (b).	WG2 - Multi-Annual Work Programme	The Secretariat will revert to the WG with suggestions on prioritising work and moving actions forward
6 (b).	WG2 – Economic Development Indicators Report	Final iteration will be circulated to the full NOAC Board ahead of the next NOAC meeting.
6 (d).	WG4 –2020 PSC Report	The Secretariat will issue the guidance for the 2020 PSC Report in the next 2 weeks
7.	Document Control Sheet	Agreed by Board
9.	Future Meetings	The Board agreed another meeting date of 27 April 2021.