

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). Annual Report 2020:

The NOAC Annual Report must be submitted to the Ministers office by the deadline of 30 April 2021. The Secretariat are currently compiling a draft report which covers the activities of NOAC for 2019. This includes details of Board membership, financial details, reports released during this time and stakeholder meetings. A draft report will be circulated to the Board by 19 April for final approval at the next NOAC meeting on 27 April.

(b). NOAC Risk Assessment:

As part of the update to the NOAC Work Programme and its timelines, a review of each working groups (WG) Terms of Reference is currently underway. Once completed a risk assessment of the overall work and activities of NOAC will be carried out to ensure it can meet its obligations and planned work activities.

5. Working Group/Work Programme Review;

Since the adoption and publication of the original NOAC Work Programme, the onset of Covid-19 and the resulting 3 month suspension of NOAC activities in 2020 has resulted in some change in NOACs activities and timelines. As part of a refresh, the Secretariat will take on board the aforementioned WG Terms of Reference review and their work timelines to provide an overall update to the Board for the April meeting.

6. Work Programme;

a) Chair;

Scrutiny Programme Update:

The drafting of the reports has now been completed and will be sent to the desktop publisher this week. The report will be circulated amongst the local authority Chief Executives first before publication. It is expected to publish this report within the next month.

Review of NOAC actions; previous recommendations and findings in previous NOAC reports:

The Secretariat are collating previous findings and recommendations from NOAC reports over the years into an overall document. This is with the aim of following up on those findings and recommendations with the stakeholders involved. This work would be split amongst the WGs according to their area of work.

Audit Scotland:

Following on from the discussion with Audit Scotland in October 2020, the Secretariat are preparing a note that provides an overall picture of their work and how it compares to the work of NOAC. The note will examine where there is alignment while acknowledging the differences between the work of Audit Scotland and NOAC. Within Audit Scotland, the Accounts Commission provides oversight of the local government sector in Scotland and involve the elected councillors in their work. The Secretariat will circulate this note prior to the next NOAC meeting.

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

Corporate Plans 2020-2024 review

Representatives from the Local Government Division were invited to the last WG1 meeting to provide their thoughts and suggestions on the review process for local authority Corporate Plans for 2020-2024. A list of these suggestions will be circulated amongst the Board by the Secretariat. It was agreed by WG1 to outsource the review to an external specialist. A scoping document will be prepared ahead of a tender issue which will be informed by the meeting held with the Local Government Division.

Terms of Reference review:

A draft Terms of Reference document is currently being discussed which will provide an updated work timeline.

Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019 Questionnaires

Returns have varied amongst the local authorities in response to the questionnaire issued last year. The Secretariat have since prepared a summarised version of the responses. Whilst a final decision is yet to be made, the WG have discussed the matter and felt that responses may not be sufficiently standardised to be presented in a formal report. Instead, one solution proposed is to cover the material as part of a commentary in the 2021 NOAC Annual Report. Further discussions will be held by the WG on the use of the summarised material. The unstandardized nature of responses this time around will help inform future reviews of Corporate Plans.

Regional Assemblies review

It was agreed that the scoping of the study to review the local authority Corporate Plans will be broadened to incorporate a review of Regional Assemblies' Corporate Plans.

Local Enterprise Offices

A review of Local Enterprise Office (LEO) service level agreements is ongoing by the D/ETE and is due to be release in the coming weeks. The WG will look to invite the relevant people from the D/ETE to a WG meeting to help identify the appropriate next steps in reviewing the work and performance of the LEOs.

Local Government Audit Service on Risk Management

The WG along with NOAC as a whole, is interested in establishing a forum with the Chairs of the internal audit committees where the risk management issue can be discussed.

The next WG1 meeting will be organised for mid-April.

c) WG2 – Performance Indicators;

Work Programme Action:

The WG held a meeting on 2 March. The WG discussed the Work Programme actions regarding data collection, improved data presentation, liaising with the Central Statistics Office and the Local Government Management Agency in respect of their own data project.

Development of NOAC Performance Indicator Framework

The WG held a broad discussion on the Frameworks in other international districts as a guide such as Scotland, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. This will help inform the direction of a NOAC Framework. In addition, the secretariat will invite Professor Turley to the next WG meeting to present on their views on performance in local authorities and on the introduction of a framework. Further discussion and research is required.

Performance Indicators report 2020

The LGRReturns system and the NOAC resource page are now live. Data Coordinators have begun the input of data.

Economic Development Indicator

The research piece by SORA has been finalised. The secretariat will share the research with the full NOAC board for acceptance at the next NOAC meeting. The secretariat will then contact the CCMA to start work on the detailed calculation under the recommendations of the research.

d) WG3 – Communications and Customer Service;

Good Practice Seminar:

The Secretariat have been in contact with the LGMA to advance arrangements for a Good Practice Seminar for October 2021. This may be held in person or remotely depending on Covid-19 restrictions later this year. The WG have arranged a meeting with the LGMA for 31 March 2021.

Customer Satisfaction Survey:

The CCMA Corporate Committee are advancing work on a tender for the survey. The NOAC Chair will meet with the LGMA to discuss the potential role for NOAC. This will help clarify what approach the WG can take in this area to provide complimentary work and avoid duplication.

Communications Strategy:

The WG Chair will prepare a scoping document for a tender is to be drawn up for an external company to undertake a benchmark survey.

NOAC Website Updates:

The Secretariat are continue to advance updates to the NOAC website. These include aesthetic fixes to pages, adding descriptions to webpages, adding more photos, the addition of a 'Latest News' section to the Homepage. The Secretariat are also exploring the use of social media to help the communication of NOACs work.

e) WG4 – Financial Management and Performance;

The WG are prioritising reports into Shared Services and unsecured loans. Furthermore, the WG will look to organise with the Institute of Public Administration a meeting with the local authority audit committees. Guidance for the 2020 Public Spending Code Report have now issued to the local authorities and are available on the NOAC website. The deadline for returns set for 28 May 2021. The WG are next due to meet on 30 March 2021.

7. Update on engagements and meetings with other bodies/organisations;

There is no upcoming engagements.

8. Future Meetings;

The next NOAC meeting is currently scheduled for:

- 27 April 2021

9. Any Other Business:

The Public Appointments Service process for new Board Members is progressing. A selection panel is due to meet shortly to examine the submissions made.

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 D/PER will be circulated to them for comment.
4 (a).	Annual Report 2020	A draft report will be circulated to the Board by 19 April for final approval at the next NOAC meeting on 27 April.
5.	Working Group/Work Programme Review	Following the WG review of their ToR, the Secretariat will provide an overall update to the Board for the April meeting.
6 (a).	Scrutiny Programme Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be sent to the desktop publisher this week • The report will be circulated amongst the local authority Chief Executives before publication.
6 (a).	Audit Scotland	The Secretariat will circulate this note prior to the next NOAC meeting.
6 (b).	Corporate Plans 2020-2024 review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of suggestions by the Local Government Division will be circulated amongst the Board by the Secretariat. • Agreed to outsource the review to an external specialist. • A scoping document will be prepared ahead of a tender issue.
6 (b).	Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019 Questionnaires	Further discussions will be held by WG1 on the use of the summarised material.

6 (b).	Local Enterprise Offices Performance	The WG will look to invite the relevant people from the D/ETE to a WG meeting to help identify the appropriate next steps
6 (c).	Development of NOAC Performance Indicator Framework	The secretariat will invite Professor Turley to the next WG meeting to present on their views on performance in local authorities and on the introduction of a framework.
6 (c).	Economic Development Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The secretariat will share the research with the full NOAC board for acceptance at the next NOAC meeting. • The secretariat will then contact the CCMA to start work on the detailed calculation under the recommendations of the research.
6 (d).	Good Practice Seminar:	The WG have arranged a meeting with the LGMA for 31 March 2021 to advance arrangements
6 (d).	Customer Satisfaction Survey	The NOAC Chair will meet with the LGMA to discuss the potential role for NOAC.
6 (d).	Communications Strategy:	The WG Chair will prepare a scoping document for a tender is to be drawn up for an external company to undertake a benchmark survey.
6 (d).	NOAC Website and Communication updates	Updates to the website are ongoing with social media use being explored.
6 (e).	Local authority audit committees	The WG will look to organise with the Institute of Public Administration a meeting with the local authority audit committees.