



# NOAC

National Oversight  
and Audit Commission



## Cork City Council Scrutiny Report

NOAC Report No. 30 - May 2021

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## Chair's Opening remarks

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 introduced significant changes to a wide range of aspects of the local government system, including in relation to matters of accountability and oversight. In that regard, the Act provided for the establishment of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) as the statutory body overseeing the local government sector. NOAC was established in July 2014 under the 2014 Act to provide independent oversight of the local government sector. NOAC's functions are wide ranging, involving the scrutiny of performance generally and financial performance specifically, supporting best practice, overseeing implementation of national local government policy and monitoring and evaluating implementation of corporate plans, adherence to service level agreements and public service reform by local government bodies.

Since I became Chair of NOAC in September 2018, I continued the good work that had been started by the previous NOAC Chair in meeting with the Chief Executives of the local authorities and their Management teams. As outlined below this process has evolved over time and continues to evolve.

The preparation of the profile report also identifies the performance of local authorities in relevant NOAC reports and provides for further examination of the results of these reports. The Scrutiny Process requires time and resources from NOAC and the local authorities in preparation of the profile report and for the Stage 1 and Stage 2 meetings. NOAC considers to date that the investment of time and resources has been worthwhile and necessary.

I have been struck by the welcome and sharing of information that has taken place at the meetings. It has provided an opportunity to learn, to listen to how the particular local authority operates, the challenges they face, the plans and ideas that have been developed and gives an opportunity to reflect on what is working well and areas that need to be addressed. It has identified areas of good practice and many of these ideas have been showcased at the NOAC Good Practice Seminars over the years. I look forward to continuing to work closely and collaboratively with all the local authorities and want to use this opportunity to thank all the Chief Executives and their teams for the time and courtesy and welcome extended to NOAC in this process.



**Michael McCarthy, Chair**  
20 May 2021



## Background to Profiles and Scrutiny Programme

In February 2017, NOAC, in accordance with its statutory functions, began to review the performance of individual local authorities. The starting point was getting an overall picture derived from the performance indicator report results, the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) audit reports, the financial position and revenue collection performance. Information on private rented sector inspections, housing stock management and maintenance data and Customer Satisfaction was all considered by using the relevant data contained in the NOAC reports published to date.

At the outset the importance of the meetings was emphasised over and above the data which NOAC had regarding local authorities. There was also an objective to broaden the NOAC members' understanding of the work of the local authorities and the individual priorities and pressures they faced and to put the information in context. Therefore, NOAC wanted to get the background perspective from the authorities and any other datasets that the Councils consider should be taken into account. Significant work is required to bring this part together and the work of the NOAC Secretariat and the local authority NOAC Coordinators must be acknowledged.

Following an initial face to face meeting, which is called a Stage 1 meeting, local authorities were invited to a Stage 2 meeting where more detailed questions would be carried out in the areas of interest to NOAC, including customer service and IT investment, collection rates, the quality of information provision to the public etc. These meetings would take place after or latterly before the main NOAC board meeting with all the board members present.

## The purpose

The process gives NOAC the opportunity to have oversight of all the local authorities and considers the factors that facilitates them in performing well, along with the barriers that may exist relevant to the individual local authority. The meetings enable the local authorities to outline their strong and weak performing areas. It allows for further examination of the results of the performance indicators and shows the results in context. It must be emphasised that these meetings differ from the Performance Indicator (PI) Validation meetings which are carried out by the Performance Indicator Working Group to interrogate the results reported in relation to selected performance indicators. These meetings, while very informative, are specific to the performance indicator process and do not consider other areas of performance that NOAC have oversight of, including Customer Service, Internal Audit, Corporate Plans etc.

During the meeting NOAC can see areas where consistent under-performance is highlighted and which can be examined further. It also allows for exemplars of best practice to be identified and used to share with other local authorities. The process as outlined, is not a follow up to the PI reports, but does enable consideration of issues that may warrant further clarification or investigation in the PI process. Local authorities have all indicated in the meetings thus far that they compare their performance and results in relation to what they deem as similar local authorities. This grouping could be reviewed further by NOAC and adopted for the results of some of its reports. Groupings are not only on size but, on levels of finances, urban and rural, staff numbers and other factors.

# The Scrutiny Process

The process has evolved over time, allowing it to become more structured, formal and documented. Given the importance of the work, it is led by the Chair of NOAC (or a delegated alternate, if required) with support from NOAC members and the Executive. The formal process agreed by the Board is termed as a constructive dialogue and is laid out below.

**1**

## Stage 1 (NOAC Scrutiny Visit)

Meeting held with NOAC Chair (or alternate) and/or one additional NOAC member and member(s) of the NOAC Executive. The Chief Executive and members of the management team, as invited by the Chief Executive shall attend.

- Stage 1 notice issued to Chief Executive of the local authority.
- Profile report prepared by NOAC Executive with input from the local authority. This is circulated along with an agenda to the local authority and NOAC attendees in advance of the visit. The report is based on general and specific information from NOAC reports relating to the local authority in question.
- Local authority to present on issues arising and take questions from attending NOAC members.
- Meeting minutes prepared and issued for comment.

**2**

## Stage 2 (NOAC Scrutiny Meeting)

Appearance at full NOAC meeting. The Chief Executive and members of the management team, as invited by the Chief Executive shall attend.

- Stage 2 notice to attend NOAC meeting issued to Chief Executive of local authority.
- Profile report updated as required and circulated along with an agenda to local authority and NOAC members in advance of the meeting.
- Local authority to present on issues arising and take questions from full NOAC board.
- Meeting minutes prepared for circulation to local authority for its comment.

**3**

## Stage 3 (NOAC Sign off and Publication)

Following completion of Stages 1 and 2 the Executive shall collate the material and present it to the NOAC Board as follows: -

- Final sign off on minutes / documents / reports.
- Comments / Findings / Recommendations to be made as required.
- Approval for completed records to be published.

## Progress to date

### 2017

To commence the process, profiles were prepared in respect of Cork City Council, Louth and Offaly County Councils and these were forwarded to the Chief Executives of the authorities concerned. The NOAC Chair at the time, Pat McLoughlin, began this process with a meeting with the Chief Executive of Louth County Council for a general discussion on the profile in August 2017. This Stage 1 meeting was followed by a similar meeting with the Chief Executive of Cork City Council in September 2017. The final Stage 1 meeting to take place in 2017 was held with the Chief Executive of Offaly County Council in October 2017. In December 2017 Louth County Council attended a meeting with NOAC after the main NOAC Board meeting. This was the first Stage 2 meeting, which formed an important part of the overall process. These meetings served a particularly important function which allowed the Council to give an overview of their work and also gave an opportunity to the full NOAC Board to put questions to the Council and understand their situation in more depth.

### 2018

In 2018 the schedule consisted of eight meetings with local authorities, four each for Stage 1 and Stage 2. A Stage 2 meeting was held with Offaly County Council in January 2018. This was followed by another Stage 2 meeting with Cork City Council in March 2018.

A new Chair, Michael McCarthy, was appointed on 24 September 2018. The process continued with Westmeath County Council in October 2018 and Kerry County Council in December 2018. These were Stage 2 meetings with the full NOAC board as in these cases, the 2018 Performance Indicator validation meetings for these authorities were deemed sufficient as Stage 1 meetings. Further Stage 1 meetings were held with Roscommon County Council and Tipperary County Council.

### 2019

The format continued with 8 meetings with local authorities during the year. Five Stage 1 meetings and three Stage 2 meetings. The Stage 1 meetings were with Donegal County Council, Laois County Council, Clare County Council, Waterford City and County Council and Carlow County Council. Stage 2 meetings took place with Roscommon County Council, Tipperary County Council and Donegal County Council.

### 2020

A meetings list was scheduled for 2020 to cover 6 additional local authorities. The year commenced with a Stage 1 meeting with Monaghan County Council in February, along with two Stage 2 meetings with Laois County Council and Waterford City and County Council. Further meetings were scheduled for April, however due to the COVID crisis these meetings were required to be deferred.

The COVID restrictions presented some challenges to the meetings but it was decided to continue the Stage 2 meetings virtually and meetings were held with Clare, Monaghan, Waterford City and County, Carlow and Sligo. These were carried out by the WebEx platform.

A socially distanced Stage 1 meeting was held in person with Limerick City and County Council in August and with Sligo County Council in September 2020.

### 2021

COVID has had a huge impact on local authorities, and in particular, for NOAC on the Scrutiny process. The Stage 1 meetings have all been held in person thus far and restrictions have allowed for no Stage 1 meetings to be held yet in 2021. The Stage 2 meetings have progressed as these were capable of being held remotely, with one held in January 2021 with Limerick City and County Council. It is hoped to make up for lost time as the restrictions are relaxed and plans are in place to commence Stage 1 meetings as soon as it is possible to do so.

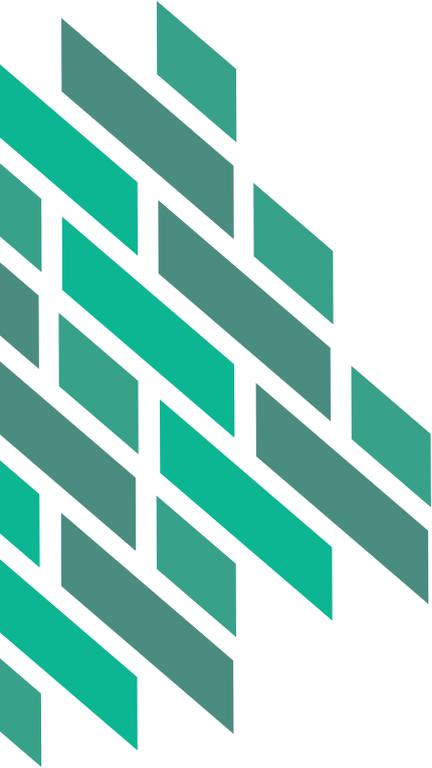
## Future meetings and reports

This report outlines the purpose and the procedures and while the process may continue to evolve it would not be expected at this time to produce another master report, similar to this one. This report takes into account the first 13 local authorities which have completed the process. It would be intended that once all stages in the scrutiny process has been fully completed with the relevant other local authorities that the report would be published on that basis and would form part of the suite of reports under the umbrella of the Scrutiny Report Process. Later in quarter 2, 2021, Sligo County Council and Limerick City and County Council reports will be published. It is anticipated that progress will continue to be made with further Stage 1 and Stage 2 meetings so that each local authority will have participated in the process. It must be outlined that significant changes and delays have been experienced due to the restrictions imposed by COVID in 2020 and 2021.

## Conclusion

The process thus far allowed for the NOAC Chair and members to get a greater understanding and insight into the challenges that face each of the local authorities. Also, issues such as collection rates, staff numbers, inspection rates, finances that are included in reports in some cases benefit from the explanation and discussion as to the reason behind these figures. The meetings also enabled NOAC to see the various priorities that each local authority considered relevant to their citizens and how they overcame various challenges and how they work collaboratively with other local authorities, state bodies and stakeholders. Areas of Good Practice have been identified along the way and these have contributed to presentations of these projects at the NOAC Good Practice Seminars in 2017, 2019 and 2020.

Cork City Council had their Stage 1 meeting in September 2017 and their Stage 2 meeting in March 2018. It is important to note that the material in this report is reflective of the position at that time. Therefore any changes to the profile from later NOAC reports are not included in this report. There were interesting discussions on the proposed boundary changes with Cork City and Cork County and how this was likely to proceed and the impact it might have. The directly elected Mayor and Housing were also topics of interest and extensive discussions took place on them. Cork City outlined many of its innovations and awards which were impressive. Some of the standouts were the CRM litter fines project and the Choice based letting project. Both projects have results in improved outcomes.



# Cork City Council Scrutiny Process

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# Cork City Council Profile

March 2018

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## Background

Cork City Council adopted the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 on 22nd of June 2015. Since then a major review of local government in the Cork region has occurred. The Smiddy report in 2016 recommended a unitary council for Cork and subsequently the MacKinnon report in 2017 recommends an enlarged City Council area. Mr Simon Coveney T.D the former and Mr. Eoghan Murphy, T.D the current Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government both welcomed and accepted the findings of the MacKinnon report.

On 28th July, 2017 the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Mr. Eoghan Murphy, T.D, established an Implementation Oversight Body to ensure that the Recommendations of the Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Local Government Arrangements in Cork were implemented. Terms of Reference for the Oversight Group were set by the Minister, who indicated that the extended boundary of the city needs to be defined by the end of October 2017 to facilitate the review of local electoral areas which is scheduled to commence in the autumn.

Cork City and County Councils reached agreement on the boundary extension in December 2017 and are currently working together on the boundary extension. I

## Innovation and awards

Cork City Council strives to improve our service delivery and introduce innovation where possible. This has been reflected in several achievements over the past three years.

- Shortlisted in four categories for the 2017 Excellence in Local Government Awards for the provision of services to disabled people in Hollyhill library, the Competitive Dialogue Housing Delivery Service, 'Greening of Glow', or their use of green bins as part of the city's GLOW, Cork Christmas Celebration and Cork Cities 2016 Commemoration Programme.
- Our CRM based Litter Fines Project won the 2016 Irish eGovernment Award for Innovation and Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award in the Innovation category. The Litter Fine system allows the council's Litter Wardens record

Litter offence details including photos and notes on a tablet.

- Shortlisted for 2016 Irish eGovernment Award in the Mobile category for our Choice Based Letting Project.
- The adoption of Choice Based Letting has led to a significant reduction in the refusal rates when assigning properties to applicants. The CBL system developed by Cork City Council has been adopted by four other local authorities to date.
- Cork City is actively engaged in the SMART cities project. The General Assembly for the EU Horizon 2020 project, Grow Smarter; in which Cork is a follower city, was held in City Hall and UCC at the beginning of June. The three day event saw over 90 delegates from the "lighthouse" cities of Cologne, Barcelona and Stockholm; as well as the other follower cities of Porto, Graz, Valetta and Suceava, discuss progress on 12 large scale demonstrator solutions in the actions areas of Low Energy Districts, Integrated Infrastructures and Sustainable Urban Mobility.
- Currently Cork City Council has a total of 194 social housing units in construction across the city. A total of 258 units have received Planning permission/Part 8 approval and are proceeding to construction. A further 481 units are in the design/ planning stages.
- Cork was voted the winner in the "The Great Town" category by members of the Academy of Urbanism in 2013 and Oliver Plunkett Street won the Great Street Award in 2015. The Great Town category is for Urban places with a population less than 350,000 at the Urban Awards Ceremony in London.
- The Academy of Urbanism will hold its Congress in Cork in June 2018.
- Cork City Council is delighted that Cork has been recognized as one of eight "ideal" cities for culture and creativity across the European Union. Cork was ranked as number one for cultural venues and facilities amongst European cities with a population of under 500,000. It also came top of the table for cultural vibrancy amongst small to medium-sized European cities.

- Cork was recognised as a Learning City designation by UNESCO in 2017 and was awarded the 3rd International Conference on Learning Cities which attracted over 600 delegates to the city in September 2017.
- The Lord Mayor and Cork City Council welcomed the World Health Organisation (WHO) Political Vision Group to Cork on Thursday the 21st of September for a two day meeting. Along with Cork City, the Political Vision Group is made up of political representatives from nine other countries: Turkey, Denmark, Israel, Finland, France, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Russian Federation, Austria and Italy. It is charged with developing the political vision for the future of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network

### Cork City Performance 2014-17

Cork City Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019 has five main goals

- Enabled Communities
- Creating a thriving City Economy
- City Identity, Culture and Heritage
- Quality Urban Environment
- Corporate Development

The current situation regarding private, social and student housing is set out in the table below:

### Enabling Communities

This Goal enables communities to actively participate in the Social, Cultural and Economic life of their own localities and the wider City life. It seeks to strengthen the democratic mandate of the City Council, develop policy and improve service delivery.

### Community Development & Social Inclusion

There have been a number of recent innovative developments in Cork City Council in the area of Community Development & Social Inclusion. Cork City Council is committed to the promotion & maintenance of a strong Community Development, Social Inclusion, and Community Wellbeing & Equality ethos across the City. As a Council we recognise the value of maintaining strong links with local communities

and with supporting the strategic development of initiatives to enhance same. Our commitment has been demonstrated in a number of ways including:

- The commitment of Cork City Council to the ongoing support and development of the Cork City LCDC.
- The innovative approach we have developed in relation to the implementation of the Local Economic & Community Plan which uses an active participatory approach bringing together key partners on a regular basis to progress & review implementation.
- The recent strengthening of our PPN structure to ensure that the PPN mechanism plays a key role in Cork City Council.
- The provision of ongoing support for a number of key initiatives in Cork City including: Cork City Healthy Cities group, Cork City LGBT Interagency Group, Cork City Age Friendly Committee, Cork City Lifelong Learning Initiative, Cork City JPC and related structures, Cork City Traveller Interagency Group and related structures.
- The retention of the RAPID programme in Cork City and related Area Implementation Teams when it was retired in other areas.
- The continuation of the RAPID Coordinator posts in Cork City Council.
- The Cork City LCDC has been selected to be part of the Pathfinder initiative.

In order to ensure a comprehensive response to the aims & objectives of the LCDC and LECP developments and as a further enhancement of our services, Cork City Council has also put in place a new model of service to enable us to meet the requirements of the LCDC and LECP processes in a progressive and innovative manner which will serve to improve outcomes for the communities we serve.

This has involved the development of an interagency initiative between Cork City Council & the HSE which will see the enhancement of the Social Inclusion & Community Development Services in Cork City Council and the development of formal linkages between Social Inclusion & Community Development Services in Cork City Council and Social Inclusion & Community Development Services in the HSE. The initiative represents a practical example

of the co-operative working arrangements between agencies that will be fundamental to the implementation of objectives of the LECP, the implementation of Healthy Ireland as well as strengthening the community function. This joint initiative between the HSE and Cork City Council includes the secondment of a Social Inclusion Specialist from the HSE to Cork City Council Unit to lead on this initiative.

### Cork Foyer

Cork Foyer recently celebrated its 10th anniversary and provides 19 units of accommodation, support and training for homeless young people and those at risk of homelessness from a wide variety of backgrounds such as care leavers, family breakdown, mental health, substance misuse etc.

Cork Foyer is overseen by a multi-agency Management Board, including representatives from Cork City/County Council, HSE, CETB, Gardai and Blackpool Community Association and core funded by the HSE and Cork City Council.

In 2016, Bishopsgrrove Supported Student Accommodation opened. Bishopsgrrove provides supported student accommodation for 39 young people who require a springboard into full independent living and to escape the cycle of homelessness. Bishopsgrrove offers high quality student accommodation, tailored support and a secure environment.

While Bishopsgrrove is managed by Cork Foyer, the sourcing and support of students is a collaborative effort between Cork Foyer, TUSLA and Focus Ireland. It aims to “through a multi agency approach, meet the accommodation, training and support needs of homeless young people aged 18 – 25 and respond to the changes in the nature and level of need”.

### Library Services

Cork City libraries services seven libraries citywide with free membership. One million items are borrowed annual by 35,000 members, many of whom live outside the City environs. The council’s two library websites attract 330,000 visits annually.

A number of festival including Cork World Book Festival, Children’s Book Festival, Growing Imaginations and Digital literacy are organised annually.

### Citizen Engagement via eServices

Choice Based letting <https://cbl.corkcity.ie> is live since November 2015. In that time 450 properties, 600,000+ property views and 100,000 expressions of interest in properties occurred. Cork County, Louth and Dunlaoghaire Rathdown are implementing the Cork City designed solution.

Cork City strives to communicate with our citizens. We provide an open data platform <https://data.corkcity.ie>, a free community messaging system [www.corkcitynow.ie](http://www.corkcitynow.ie) and an eConsultation portal <https://consult.corkcity.ie>

Cork City Council is advanced in rolling out a Corporate Customer Service Request System using the Microsoft Dynamic CRM platform. The three main service directorates Roads and Transportation, Environment and Recreation and Housing and Community are live on the platform with mobile working using fully digital service requests.

### Creating a thriving City Economy

This Goal aims to increase employment in the City by optimising the capacity and attractiveness of the City to support economic activity. In 2014 the City Council developed its Cork City Centre Strategy 2014, which identified three delivery strategies:

- Improvement and development (improve public realm, services etc, development of sites and buildings for new enterprises and activities)
- Management (a fresh approach based on a partnership of the key stakeholders)
- Marketing.

Cork City Council has formed a Steering Group to direct the implementation of the City Centre Strategy and its constituent projects. The Steering Group has developed an Implementation Plan to provide a focus for City Council directed actions in the City Centre, and to communicate to the general public and key stakeholders the breadth and depth of projects that are being delivered for the benefit and revitalisation of the City Centre.

In excess of €1 billion worth of private sector development in underway or in the planning process in Cork’s city Centre or in the City Docklands area.

## Economic Development

Cork City is the economic driver of the Southern Region. It is a major centre for ICT, Medical Devices, Education, Health, International and Business Service and Public Administration. Mahon is the location of the largest concentration of FDI employment outside of Dublin with in excess of 5,000 jobs. There is currently in excess of 37,000 m<sup>2</sup> of fourth generation office space under construction in the city centre, all served by sustainable transport and available for occupation from late 2018. A further 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> is approved and ready for commencements whilst another 45,000 m<sup>2</sup> is in the planning process. The Employment and Land Use Survey 2016 involved a survey of every business within Cork City Council's administrative area during summer 2016. Some of the key findings are below

- Employment in the Cork City administrative area is at an all-time high of 78,244; the Survey indicates over 9% growth in employment since 2011.
- Employment grew at a higher rate than the state average between 2011 and 2016, which was 8%;
- Over half of all new businesses since 2011 have located in the City Centre.
- 600 new businesses have delivered 5,200 jobs

## Cork City Local Enterprise Office

Since 2014 and the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office as part of Cork City Council there has been a marked increase in the range of activities being undertaken by this section and in the number of promoters and businesses engaging with the services and supports available. While the key indicators for the LEO performance is the "nett job creation each year" there is also a wide range of supports aimed at a large cohort of entrepreneurs that are not included in the performance indications, for the period 2014 to 2016:

- 78 businesses supported financially to create 335.5 whole time equivalent jobs.
- 149 training programmes involving 1,782 participants;
- Provision of one-to-one mentoring and Business Advice Clinics to 591 businesses;

- 26 referrals to Micro Finance Ireland, 12 of which were approved;
- 94 Trading Online Voucher approved for city base businesses;
- 107 applications from young entrepreneurs for Ireland Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE.IE)
- Over 3,000 second level students participating in the Cork Schools Enterprise Programme
- Over 500 third level students engaging in LEO sponsored initiatives such as UCC Ignite, CIT Student Inc and the CIT Prize for Innovation.

New initiatives such as the Retail Programme developed specifically to address the challenges facing city traders has extended the supports available from the LEO to a cohort that previously might not have engaged. The LEO Cork City has delivered 4 retail programmes to over 40 city centre retailers since 2014.

In 2016 the first "Local Enterprise Week" was introduced across the country with each LEO providing a range and variety of activities to encourage would be entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. The LEO Cork City ran over 15 events for 220 participants.

Each year Enterprise Ireland undertakes a client engagement survey which measures the quality of the service and supports provided by the LEO and in 2016 Cork City obtained a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 28 which was well above the national average.

## City Identity, Culture and Heritage

This Goal promotes and celebrates the identity, culture and heritage of the City.

## Tourism, Events, Arts and Marketing (TEAM)

Cork City Council has a dedicated group (TEAM) to promote culture and tourism within the City and its surrounds. Some of the achievements are outlined below:

- Creates a number of events annually, which by their nature draw numbers of people into the City Centre. These include the Turning on the Christmas lights which drew 20,000 people and the Christmas GLOW festival bringing 150,000 on to the streets. The

spring season then led to the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and festivities which drew in excess of 55,000 alone with a proposed Culture Night in 2017 expected to top 50,000 people.

- Have been running the Lee Sessions since 2014 as a traditional cultural experience for visitors adding to the vibrancy and footfall of the city and these have been hugely successful with daily sessions in venues which are easily accessible.
- Produce the Top Attractions in Cork brochure which is widely distributed in the City and County and available on board the cruise ships which has actively promoted footfall to the various attractions in the City and evidenced by Elizabeth Fort welcoming an increase of 10,300 visitors during the first 8 months of 2017.
- Seventeen information kiosks are placed in hotels, airport, train station etc which reference [www.cork.ie](http://www.cork.ie) for tourism and event information. In 2016, 450,000 page requests were made from these kiosks.
- Elizabeth Fort was acquired from the OPW by Cork City Council in 2014 and opened to the public fully in 2015. The fort had 45,000 visitors in 2016. Events hosted at Elizabeth Fort include Heritage Open Day, Culture Night, Exhibitions, Midsummer Festival, Educational Involvement i.e. Department of Archaeology UCC, CIT (Crawford Art and Design), photo shoots etc. Elizabeth Fort has received a ‘Certificate of Excellence’ from Trip Advisor for 2016 and 2017.
- Cork City Council has been nominated for the Cork Chamber Awards 2017 for 1916 Clár Comórtha Céad Bliain, Centenary Programme and the Greening of GLOW.

### Culture and Heritage

Cork City Council has a strong existing programme shared between arts, library, heritage, parks, architects, community and Irish Language. Cork City Council’s Culture Team has cross directorate representation.

Cork City Council held a very successful 2016 commemoration programme with over 66,000 visitors to the City for 14 exhibitions, 66 events and a State ceremony.

Cork Heritage Open Day took place on Sat

the 19th of August. The one day event saw 41 buildings open in Cork City free of charge, with another 100 events and festivals also programmed on the day. There was an estimated 18,000 visits to the buildings and events.

### Quality Urban Environment

This goal seeks to deliver a high quality environment, cityscape and improved public realm.

### Development

Cork City Council adopted its current City Development Plan (2015-2021) in April 2015 and a Mid Term review was carried out in 2017. Local Area Plans are published for both Tivoli and City Docklands. These areas offer significant growth opportunities for the City.

- 180 ha of ‘brownfield’ lands for new mixed use urban quarters
- Potential for close to 30,000 residents and over 30,000 jobs
- Significant investment in infrastructure needed

The current situation regarding private, social and student housing is set out in the table below:

Current Residential and Student Housing				
	Housing		Student Accommodation	
	Private	Social	Units	Beds
Under Construction	74	194	47	296
Recently Approved	136	258	186	1,017
In Process	1,029	481*	284	1,356
Extended Duration	1,837	N/A		
Pre planning**	66	50		

Updated 12 September 2017

\* 481 units (includes site at Boherboy Road, which will be a mixture of private and social housing)

\*\* excluding the LIHAF sites at Old Whitechurch Road and the South Docks.

There is capacity for c. 18,000 additional units within the current city boundary.

## Housing and Community

Cork City Council manages an estate of close to 9,000 properties across the city. The council is engaged in major housing projects in the regeneration of the North West quarter, Deanrock, Gerald Griffin Street and Church Road.



During the 2014-16 period Cork City has delivered several achievements including

- 161 new social housing homes acquired
- 21 Capital Assistance Scheme homes
- 129 Leasing Initiative homes provided
- 844 vacant houses returned to productive use
- 7,200 houses received attic and cavity wall insulation
- 330 units received Deep Energy Retrofit measures
- 5,400 boilers serviced each year
- 22,000 service requests received each year
- 13,000 maintenance jobs completed in 2016

Currently a total of 194 social housing units are under construction across the city. A total of 258 units have received Planning permission/Part 8 approval and are proceeding to construction. A further 481 units are in the design/planning stages.

## Roads and Transportation

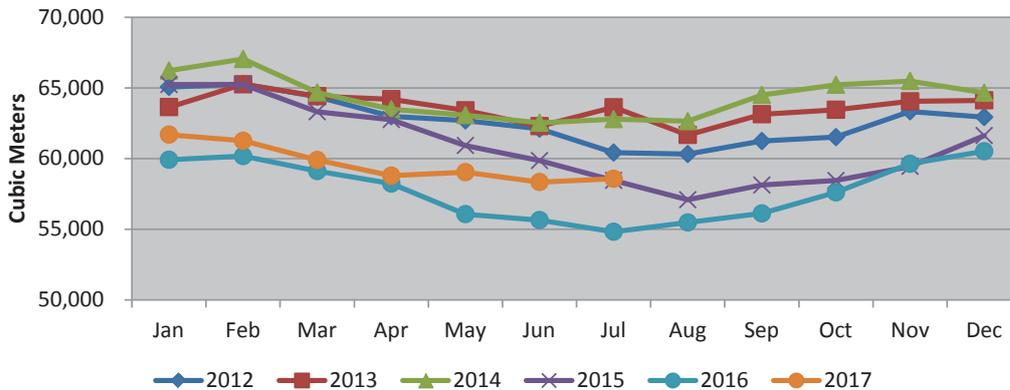
During the 2014-16 period Cork city has delivered several achievements including

- Resurfaced 129,000 sq.M (18.5km) - €4.6million
- Completed refurbishment of Clontarf Bridge Phase 1 - €1.6m
- Maintained 14,333 public lights, 1.5% outage & 3 % of inventory upgraded
- 38,500 gullies cleaned
- 17,800 sq. M patched / potholed
- Maintained 283 traffic & pedestrian junctions
- Received 2,971 customer service requests
- Secured Members approval – Metropolitan Cycling Strategy, Strategic Corridor Studies, Parking & Taxi Byelaws, Coach Parking Reviews, Part 8's including the City Centre Movement Strategy CCMS
- Facilitated 130,000 vehicles in the city centre each day
- Facilitated 12 million bus passengers in 2016
- Facilitated 1 million off street & 1.4 million on street parking events in 2016

## Environment and Recreation

### Water Network Improvements:

Volume of Drinking Water Provided



Following on from a number of significant network infrastructure improvements over the past 2 years projects the volume of water produced by Cork City Council continues to drop year on year (2017 summer increase is due to a scheduled flushing programme). As the volume of Unaccounted for water (UFW) continues to drop the requirement to treat water reduces. This has the twin effect of reducing production costs as well as being positive from an environmental perspective as less water is extracted for processing.

### Greening of Glow:

The greening of festivals and events was a waste minimisation initiative which was planned and implemented by the Environmental Awareness and Street Cleaning sections in consultation with TEAM staff.

Sets of bins that could take the following waste streams were deployed:

- General Waste (black bin)
- Composting (orange bin)
- Recycling (green bin)



In total 2.08 tonnes of waste was diverted from landfill over the 4 week period equating to 30% of all waste produced at the festival. As well as the environmental benefit of diverting waste from landfill, the cost of treating compostable and recyclable waste is also less than the cost of disposal to landfill. The Green Elves were a star attraction throughout the GLOW Festival. They interacted with families and children, delivered the green message and helped people choose the correct bin.

### Cork SMART Gateway

The Cork Smart Gateway aims to enhance the reputation of Cork as an attractive region for people to live, work, visit and invest. The Cork Smart Gateway will achieve this vision by:

- Engaging with citizens to identify the evolving challenges and opportunities that impact on their quality of life.
- Identifying suitable and achievable smart projects through a collaborative multi stakeholder approach.
- Encouraging an open and innovative ecosystem that supports start ups and SMEs through the facilitation of test beds to pilot new technologies.
- Promoting Cork as a smart destination internationally.

Projects currently under development are:

- Smart Street – McCurtain Street
  - Key transport artery for city
  - Mobility Hub
  - Air Quality Sensors
  - Public Wifi

- Smart Compactor Bins
- Digital Strategy
- Smart Cities and Communities Light house Application for 2018

## Corporate Development

This Goal aligns the structure and resource of Cork City Council to meet the needs of citizens and business in the City. Develop an organisation that is effective, efficient and accountable to the citizen.

### EU Funding

Cork City appointed a EU funding officer in 2015. We Identified EU funding opportunities to finance work which meets needs of citizens & business in the city. Over 20 applications submitted across directorates. Funding to a value of over €1.2m for projects in Cork committed in 2017. These projects will help position Cork City as a global and SMART city over the coming years.

### Income and Budgets

Cork City Council has a long tradition of achieving a balanced budget. The local adjustment factor reduced from -10% to 0% in 2017. Initiatives such as the Rent Payment Incentive Scheme and the setting up of a hard debt unit have increased collection levels. Arrears in housing loans peaked in 2016 and have been slowly reducing.

### Change Management

Cork City Council is constantly changing and attempting to utilise technology and leaner processes to provide efficiencies and better services and information to our customers and citizens.

Some of these areas include:

- Choice Based Letting online service has provided transparency around supply, more engagement from applicants and allowed enhanced reporting analysis of the active housing list. Approved Housing Bodies will be joining the CBL system in June 2017.
- The implementations of Customer Service Relationship Management solutions have allowed for fully digital records with workflow processes and service level monitoring.

- We are currently in a pilot with the Department of Social Protection (DSP) to implement API Data sharing solutions that will streamline the collection and validation of social protections information when processing applications for various services.

Cork City Council is currently reviewing our internal structures in order to best place Cork as a Global City over the coming decades.

## Performance Indicators

With reference to the specific issues relating to Cork City Council's 2014-16 returns these are dealt with in turn below.

### Income collection

Rates collection levels are continuing to rise in 2016. A Rates Incentive scheme was introduced in the 2017 budget. The scheme will operate in 2018 based on 2017 actual results. Under the scheme, Rate payers who pay under €4,000 annually in rates may qualify for a rebate of 3% on their 2018 rates bill provided certain targets are met. Over 57% of the city rate payers have an annual rates liability of under €4,000.

### Collection Level of Rates from the Annual Financial Statement

2013	2014	2015	2016
72%	72%	78%	79%

Housing Rents collection has stabilised at 81% for the past two years. This is below the national average. The decrease in collection levels has been largely due to backdating of rent increases for undeclared household income. This would have affected the amount to be collected for the year as a whole. Tenants generally were unable to clear the backdated increases in lump sum repayments before year end rather it would be the case that they would make a weekly agreement to commence repayment over an extended period beyond the current calendar year depending on the size of the increase.

The City Council recruited a number of temporary staff in October 2016 to target the arrears in a sustained manner. It is expected that their work will have a significantly positive impact on the collection levels for 2017.

### Collection Level of Rents from the Annual Financial Statement

2013	2014	2015	2016
85%	83%	81%	81%

Housing Loans collection is at 70% for 2016. This is above the national average for 2015 of 68%.

### Collection Level of House Loans from the Annual Financial Statement

2013	2014	2015	2016
78%	74%	71%	70%

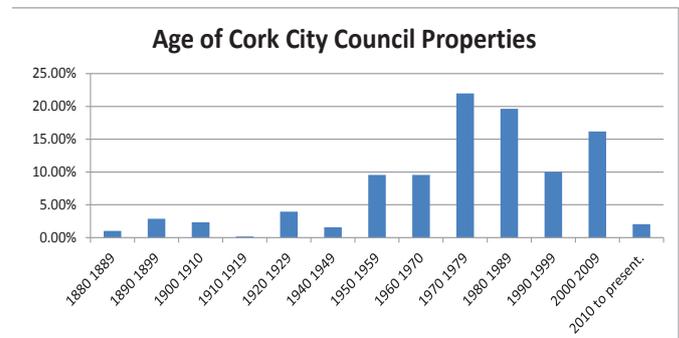
### Housing Management and Maintenance

- In 2014 the council had a vacancy rate of 5.3% this has reduced to 3.5% in 2016.
- The re-letting period has grown to 110.8 weeks from 83 weeks in 2014.
- Re-letting costs of €35,013 in 2014 are now down to €28,878 in 2016.
- The turnaround time is substantially higher than the median due to the poor condition of some of the units returned to use last year, due to the factors outlined below.

The reasons for this perceived poor performance relative to national averages is outlined below.

- Cork City Council has a significant housing stock and limits on resources for the last number of years, both staffing and financial. This has had an inevitable impact on service levels.
- The focus during 2014-15 was to optimise the number of houses returned to productive use, meaning that resources were devoted to properties requiring little work to allow re-letting.
- In hindsight it may have been more appropriate to define these long term vacant units which we could not at that time afford to repair, as derelict properties rather than retaining them on the repair list.
- It may be the case that other local authorities have used a different methodology for categorising unoccupied stock, which may account for an element of difference in the calculation of returns. This may be something that would be worth exploring by NOAC as part of the reporting process.

- In 2015 and 2016 particularly, significant resources were devoted to returning long term voids to active stock. As some works were outsourced, there is a time lag created due to the necessity to follow established procurement protocols for the appointment of contractors. –
- There were 40 properties on the 2016 return which had been vacant for periods of up to 5 years, which results in the average re-letting time being skewed upwards. While a smaller volume of long term vacant units were carried forward into 2017, the cumulative average re-letting time as the end of June 2017 stands at 66.17 weeks.
- The houses currently on the repair list would be those where keys were returned in 2016 and 2017 only.
- Another factor to be considered is that of 'hard to let' units which despite the introduction of the Choice Based Letting system in late 2015, still prove challenging as a number of this type of property can be refused more than once before a successful tenancy was achieved.



The NOAC report notes as of 2014 no housing condition survey had taken place. A submission to the 2018 budget has been made to commence a 10% sample Condition Survey. To survey all 9000 properties would cost between €2 to €3million and to be done in one year, would be at a rate of 173 properties per week. It is my understanding that 50% of Local Authorities do not have a Condition Survey and there is some efforts being made nationally to address same.

**Example of some of our older housing stock.**



**Private Rented**

The rate of inspections fell slightly between 2015 and 2016. HAP inspections commenced in late 2015 in Cork City Council, the adjustment is due to the large percentage of HAP dwellings inspected not meeting regulatory requirements and also the number of Multi-Storey developments inspected.

2016		2015	
Number of rented dwellings inspected during the year	619	Number of rented dwellings inspected during the year	635
Number of inspections carried out	935	Number of inspections carried out	1007

A Customer Relationship Management System is being introduced to the Housing & Community Directorate which will track all service requests. A project is being scoped at present to introduce a Corporate Customer portal to be trialled in the Housing Maintenance area which will help improve the dissemination of information to, for example, Council tenants on housing policy.

**Libraries**

As is the case with library services across the 31 Local Authorities (as well as other similar services such as Fire) users can come from both within and outside a Local Authorities' administrative area. Cork City Council's administrative area is geographically small and the catchment area for our libraries extends far outside of this area. Many of our libraries are located on or near the City County boundary and attract a large patronage from these nearby County areas. This

has an effect on the cost per head of population and library visits per head of population figures calculated for the NOAC Performance Indicators.

That notwithstanding we are of the opinion that the investment that we put into the library services drives, in no small part, the very positive visitor data. Two particular elements of this investment that we believe are worthy of particular mention are firstly our targeted programmes of activities. Throughout the year we deliver programmes of events which promote, among other things, our goals of supporting lifelong learning and the promotion of literacy and reading.

A new Hollyhill Library was officially opened on the 19th September 2016.

**Fire Services**

The fire service like the library service provides first response services to a densely populated hinterland around the City which skews the per capita figures. The City fire services also provide second response services to other areas beyond the immediate hinterland. The county is divided into zones.

Zone A – Cork City has full responsibility. This includes densely populated areas outside the City boundary like Douglas, Grange etc.

Zone B – Cork City first response and hand over to county after an hour. This includes areas to the north of the City boundary.

Zone B1 – Cork City only go to serious incidents this includes areas like Cork Airport and Passage West.

Zone C – Cork county fire service covers this area (every area outside the above zones) but we go if requested

**Sick Leave**

The first point worth noting with respect to the Self-certified Sick leave figure is the downward trend in this figure for Cork City Council over the past number of years. In addition, the 2016 indicator again shows a similar level to the 2015 figure. Cork City Council has robust policies and procedures with regards to sick leave in place. These include a process whereby all self certified sick leave is correctly recorded on the CORE Time System and Return to Work (RTW) interviews are conducted in all cases with RTW forms returned to HR and held on employees files for record purposes.

Cork City Council has adopted VFM report No. 28, and has included the target of 3.5% in the HR Department's Operational Plan for 2016. Continuous effort and focus on monitoring and managing of all absences will continue during 2016. In addition robust monitoring of all sick leave, both certified and self certified, has been delivered for some time now through quarterly review and reporting directly to the Chief Executive. The Percentage of paid working days lost due to sickness absence through medically certified leave is 3.8% and Self Certified is .45%.

### Public Spending Code (PSC)

Formal awareness training was provided to all project / programme owners in 2016 with respect to awareness of obligations under the PSC. Instead of carrying out rolling in-depth checks which proved somewhat impractical Internal audit increased the level of coverage of the project inventory to achieve a comparable outcome. Internal audit's findings were disseminated within the organization and presentations were given on how project owners could implement these findings.

In preparing the checklists for the completion of the quality assurance report it became apparent that timely approvals to project overspends had not occurred prior to incurring expenditure in some cases. These incidences were raised with the project owners and many had occurred prior to projects that we still in the expenditure being incurred phase. The recommendations were reinforced. A post project review template was drafted and disseminated to assist project owners with such reviews.

Cumulative value of inventory covered by the in-depth checks is 20.9%, this already meets the required 15% by end year 3.

	Performance Indicators	2016	2015		2014	
		Cork City Data	Cork City Data	Median/Average	Cork City Data	Median/Average
H1	Social Housing provided in year per 1,000 population	8.33	2.11	1.91	1.55	0.80
H2	% of directly provided dwellings vacant at 31/12	3.51	5.03	3.5	5.9	3.8
H3a	Average time from vacation date to PI year re-letting date (weeks)	110.96	92.74	28.43	82.54	31.43
H3b	Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	€28,878.20	€31,019.65	€13,378.40	€35,012.51	€11,534.91
H4	Average repair and maintenance cost per unit	€2,751.45	€1,408.97	€1,292.57	€1,401.45	€1,272.30
H5	Inspections carried out in year as % of registrations	3.52	5.75	5.64	7.57	6.51
H6	Total Number of Adult Homeless in Emrg. Accommodation as % of Total Number of Adult Homeless	32.16	27.64			
R1a	% Regional Road KM that ever received a PSCI rating	98	78	68	0	47.9
R1b	% Total Regional Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	14	35	20	N/A	11.15
R1c	% Total Primary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	24	30	11	17	6.4
R1d	% Total Secondary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	17	16	8	N/A	4.61
R1e	% Total Tertiary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	3	1	5	M/A	3.63
R2a	KM Regional Road strengthened using road improvement grants	.3	0.5	10.2		
R2b	KM Regional road resealed using road maintenance grants	0.0	0	8.3		
R2/3	% Motor tax transactions performed online	N/A	N/A	56.6	N/A	54.7
W1	% private schemes with water quality in compliance	100	100	99.07	92.5	97.9
E1	% households availing of a 3-bin service	72.78	83	34.87	63.28	31/66
E2	Pollution cases on hand at year end as % of the cases that arose that year	4.01	4.4	8.49		
E3	% area unpolluted or litter free	1%	1	14	2	9.5
P1	New buildings inspected as % of new buildings notified	35.03	18.38	24	32.62	17.71
P2	% of determinations that confirmed the decision made by LA	30%	89.74	71.88	70.83	7.17
P3	Ratio of planning cases being investigated at year end as to cases closed	2.01	2.85	2.61	1.71	2.88
P4	Cost per capita of the Planning Service	€31.54	€29.22	€26.76	€30.71	€25.27
F1	Cost per capita of Fire Service (based on 2011 Census)	€90.58	€90.73	€57.88	€93.13	€55.9
F2	Average time to mobilise Brigade re Fire (Minutes)	1.53	1.7	1.6	1.71	1.66
F3	% of Fire Cases in which first attendance is within 10 minutes	89.57	88.93	56.98	€89.42	58.6
L1a	No. of Library visits per head of population	6.20	5.24	3.67	5.9	3.71
L1b	No. of Items borrowed per head of population	6.75	6.9	3.82		
L2	Cost of Library Service per capita	€57.46	€56.05	€30.36	€57.08	€29.41
Y1	% of local schools involved in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme	50	50	68.07	42.86	51.86
C1	WTE staff per 1,000 population	9.87	9.69	5.58	9.63	5.63
C2a	% of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave in year	3.81	3.34	3.52	3.3	3.34
C2b	% of paid working days lost to self-certified sick leave in year	0.45	0.44	0.39	0.47	0.4
C3	LA website page views per 1,000 population	28,713	27,714	11,666	26,508	9,651
C4	Overall cost of ICT Provision per WTE	€2,009.10	€2,015.38	€2,680.15	€2,006	€2,646.8
M2a	% Commercial Rates Collected in year	79	78	83	72	77
M2b	% Rent & Annuities Collected in year	81	81	85	83	84
M2c	% Housing Loans Collected in year	70	71	68	74	67
J1	LEO jobs output per 1,000 population	.97	0.45	0.66	1.25	0.73

*It should be noted that the information for much of this report relates to NOAC indicators for 2014 - 2016, and Cork City has expanded since 31st May 2019*



# Cork City Council Profile

## Stage 1 meeting

NOAC profile meeting with Cork City Council

Date:	26 September 2017	
Venue:	City Hall, Cork	
Attendees:	<b>Cork City Council</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ann Doherty, Chief Executive</li> <li>■ Gerard Desmond, PI Co-ordinator</li> </ul>	<b>NOAC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pat McLoughlin, Chair</li> <li>■ Sheila McMahon</li> </ul>

Pat McLoughlin referred to the document that had been forwarded by Gerard Desmond the previous week in response to NOAC's draft document and explained that this was essentially what NOAC wanted – an outline of the challenges and priorities of the City Council setting the context of the work undertaken and the performance outcomes. He explained that NOAC was conscious that only a partial picture was available from the limited areas that it has been able to look at and that the members can learn more from direct engagement with local authorities individually. NOAC had found that the review visits to a selection of authorities by the members involved in the performance indicators validation had greatly improved their understanding of the various issues faced by the local authorities.

Ann Doherty summarised the major areas of focus of the City Council, including their housing programme, a lot of effort being put into the customer facing piece, a joint tourism project with Cork County Council and a community initiative involving the HSE. She indicated that information on additional enterprise initiatives could also be added to the information already provided to NOAC. She referred to considerable changes in the functions being prioritised in the last few years and to the Council's advocacy role for the region and the marketing and promotion of Cork City in a national and global context as important areas of her focus. She mentioned that inter-agency engagement was probably a stronger feature in the urban authorities, particularly in the health and community area.

Gerard Desmond queried if other local authorities were calculating average re-letting times in accordance with the guidelines and was advised that this indicator was reviewed at the validation visits with 6 authorities this summer and, while there were issues around the re-letting cost part of the indicator, this was not the case when it came to the average time calculation. The explanation seemed to be related to the fact that Cork City was bringing back into occupation units that had been unoccupied for very long periods, whereas this wasn't happening in other authorities to any significant extent. Ann Doherty mentioned that the current housing shortage was having a negative impact on the social mix, with housing in the city only affordable for the better-off or the high proportion of social housing tenants (over 20% of households), while others have to secure housing in more affordable parts of the county.

Pat McLoughlin enquired as to the very gradual improvement in commercial rates collection levels, notwithstanding the debt management project initiatives, and Ann Doherty explained that the effects of the recession, which were very bad in Cork, were still being felt in the retail sector. She also referred to the fact that the rate struck by the Council had not been increased for a period of seven years.

The Chair indicated that it would probably be December when the Chief Executive would be invited to meet with the NOAC members. He outlined the areas of particular interest to the NOAC members in discussions with the Chief Executive, including customer service for rates payers and quality of information provision to the public. In the meantime, NOAC will update its profile document to include the 2016 performance indicator data that had since become available and the City Council should also revise its document to exclude any text that was already covered by the profile and to add in other appropriate material relating to their operational context and priorities, as discussed at the meeting.




# Stage 2 meeting

National Oversight and Audit Commission Meeting with  
Cork City Council

Date:	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	
Venue:	Custom House, Dublin 1	
Attendees:	<p><b>Chair:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pat McLoughlin</li> </ul> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tara Buckley</li> <li>▪ Martina Moloney</li> <li>▪ Paul Lemass</li> <li>▪ Sharon O'Connor</li> <li>▪ Colleen Savage</li> <li>▪ John Buckley</li> <li>▪ Connie Hanniffy</li> <li>▪ Michael McGreal</li> </ul> <p><b>Secretariat:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lisa Clifford</li> <li>▪ Claire Gavin</li> <li>▪ Neill Dalton</li> <li>▪ Colin Flood</li> <li>▪ Jason Kennedy</li> </ul> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dave Holohan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cork City Council:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ann Doherty, Chief Executive</li> <li>▪ Pat Ledwidge, Director Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Enterprise</li> <li>▪ Valerie O'Sullivan, Director Housing and Community</li> <li>▪ David Joyce, Director Environment and Recreation</li> <li>▪ John Hallahan, Head of Finance</li> <li>▪ Ger Desmond, Senior Executive Officer</li> </ul>



The Chair welcomed the Chief Executive and her management team to the meeting. The Chief Executive introduced her team and went on to update the group on matters concerning the Council and the challenges that they face. A comprehensive briefing document was then circulated to all NOAC members. The CE outlined how the Council was looking forward to the challenge of the boundary change and change in the population that avails of their services. She also mentioned that the city also hosts 30,000 students during its academic year which brings its own challenges. She outlined how they are proud of their Public Participation Network. She also mentioned that there are 4,664 applicants on the social housing list at present.

The Cork City Council team then proceeded to answer questions from the NOAC members.

## Challenges

When asked about what challenges they face, the City Council mentioned that looking for more direct foreign investment is always a main challenge. They also referred to the threat that 2 companies are responsible for 10,000 jobs, which is a third of the number of people employed in their area. They also wish to grow their indigenous business and mentioned that retail business is currently under threat. They also referred to the challenge of attracting talent to the city. The issue of housing students is a particular challenge coupled with the lack of private housing being

built. They feel the reason for this non-activity in the private housing market is a lack of a return on investment. They also informed the group that they wish to ensure that children in social housing have a clear pathway to education.

## Customer Service

The City Council told the group about their Customer Service Request System and how they are designing a portal to log calls. They feel that it is difficult to get positive customer satisfaction as people only rate their service when they have something negative to say. As a result of this they intend to measure customer satisfaction by how quickly the council responds to a query and how quickly a requested service has been put in place. They are also looking at direct digital interaction. For example if a pot hole is to be filled in, a request will go straight to the engineer for that area. They also have a direct alert system for instances such as road closure and flooding/snow. The council also interacts with other local authorities using a Microsoft Dynamics user group. Customer experience rather than customer satisfaction is measured.

## Housing

The council stated that there is planning permission granted for 450 houses, with another 700 being processed. They stated that the price of rent in Cork is up to the price level in Dublin and that housing students is an issue. The Housing Assistance Payment system is very successful. They currently have 9,000 social houses in the Council's stock. One fifth of their tenants are reliant on social welfare and they need to see them progress into education. They have 4,664 eligible applicant households of which half are a single person households. 54% of these households log into the Choice Based Letting system. In terms of social housing rents the Council had an 85% collection rate in 2017, which is up from 78% in 2016. They now have four temporary staff following up on outstanding arrears. There was a perception that arrears were not being collected which has now been addressed by employment of the additional staff. They also mentioned that they expect an improvement in private rented inspections as a result of technological improvements that will make inspections easier to conduct. Private housing is an issue with planning permission granted for 450 units and another 700 are in the pre planning/planning process and it is hoped a further 2,000 will be possible in the near future. It is hoped that the bus connect programme will address some of the traffic challenges currently being experienced by the City residents.

## Finance

The Council team informed the group that some investment was to be put into the Docklands project. Currently the Docklands is 90% privately owned. The Council have also acquired some sites, and made a profit by selling one of them. It is expected that more money will be put into fire services, parks, library service and cultural/arts areas.

The rates collections are improving since 2016. There are staff working behind the scenes helping out businesses in arrears. The City Council are trying to nurture businesses and see them grow.

## Economic and Community Development

The City Council share their tourism approach with the County Council. A 2015 strategy was developed with Fáilte Ireland. Pure Cork was part of that strategy. The Docklands has huge tourism potential and they estimate that they may get 200,000 visitors through the Docklands once developed. They also have a viable business tourism sector which pulls in business visitors through various events. The IDA are also bringing in businesses to look at potential locations.

The Council also spoke about support structures they plan to put in place to address the proposed boundary change which will impact how they do business, in terms of day to day and strategic operations. There are also plans for a new water treatment plant in 2019 to increase the general water capacity for the City.

There is a City Centre Strategy which has introduced programmes like Feel Good Friday and, Parking Promotions to combat the on line shopping challenges and to improve the customer service experience. Dividing the city into quarters and promoting the independent trader and encouraging people to live back in the city is all improving the city experience and is a culture change. Building functions are being changed with 3 floors being converted to residential and one floor remaining as retail in some cases. Strategic acquisitions are also being made to control the use of buildings in some areas.

The City Council work closely with the Local Enterprise Office. LEO is based in City Hall and have integrated well with the City Council and also with Cork County and Kerry County Councils. There are start-up stalls in the City Hall and co-working space is provided. The structure changes and reforms from the 2014 legislation are now bedded down and there is an Implementation Group in place.

## Performance Indicators

The Council told the group that they compare themselves with the four Dublin Councils in terms of comparing levels of performance. They stated that they find the performance indicators a good challenge and they find the comparative data useful. When asked what action was taken after the 10% drop in Brown Bin collections the Council advised that they have no involvement in their bin collections services; it is run by three different companies, and they simply collect the data.

## Corporate Planning

The Council said that they regularly review the corporate plan and communicate corporate goals to their staff. They feel that areas such as environmental issues and public expectations need to be improved, but they feel that they have come a lot farther than they thought.

## Conclusion

The Chair praised the Council for consistently getting their AFS in before the deadline and then thanked the Chief Executive and her team for coming in to meet with NOAC and for providing valuable insight into the work of the Council.

The meeting was brought to a close.



**National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)**  
**An Coimisiún Náisiúna Mairseachta & Iniúchoíreachta**

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