



## **National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)**

### **Minutes of the Meeting – Tuesday 7 September 2021 at 11:45am**

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Meeting Platform

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members:	Brian Cawley	Margaret Lane
	Mary Hurley	Philomena Poole
	Declan Breathnach	Noel Harrington
	Ciarán Hayes	
Secretariat:	Claire Gavin	Neill Dalton
	John Goldrick	Darren Browne

Apologies: Niall Quinn

Meeting without secretariat

Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies section 4.9 states that the Board should meet at least twice a year without executive Board members or management present to discuss any matters deemed relevant. The members held this meeting at the start of the meeting

#### **1. Minutes & actions of previous meeting;**

The minutes of the NOAC meeting of 20 July 2021 were approved and they will be published on the website.

#### **2. Declaration of conflict of interest;**

No conflicts of interest were raised.

### **3. Matters Arising;**

There were no matters arising.

### **4. Work Programme:**

#### **a) Chair;**

Following the earlier meeting with representatives of Meath County Council, the Board agreed that the meeting provided a valuable insight into their work. It was suggested that for future meetings the presentation would be limited to 15 minutes in order to facility a greater question and answer session

The onset of COVID-19 has delayed progress in carrying out Stage 1 meetings with the remaining local authorities. With public health restrictions now easing, the Chair issued an open invite to the other Board Members to attend future Stage 1 meetings. Details of these meetings will be circulated in due course. Going forward, there is a Stage 2 meeting to be held as part of the next NOAC meeting with South Dublin County Council and Stage 1 meetings will be arranged with the county councils of Fingal and Kildare.

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

The WG Chair welcomed new members Ciarán Hayes and Declan Breathnach to the working group. The Eastern and Midland Regional Assemblies have provided them with a copy of their monitoring report on regional, spatial and economic strategy which also includes recommendations for NOAC's consideration. These will be discussed at the next WG meeting before reverting to the full NOAC Board. An external contractor is currently working on reviews of current local authority and regional assembly corporate plans. The findings of which will be communicated with the full board following the next WG1 meeting. The next WG1 meeting is scheduled for 24 September.

#### **c) **WG2 – Performance Indicators;****

The Secretariat provided an update on the progress of the 2020 Local Authority Performance Indicator Report. Earlier this year, NOAC received correspondence from the Joint Oireachtas Committee enquiring about the timeline of publication following the delayed publication of the report in 2020. NOAC have committed to publishing this year's report in September which would be the normal time of year for publication. The Secretariat outlined the timelines for feedback and approval by the working

group and then the full board before being issued to the desktop publisher by 14 September. The Secretariat will continue to check for final amendments before publication. Further material from the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) is expected by 10 September. With regards entries covering Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) data, this year's report will progress without those entries as they will not be prepared in time for this year's deadline. At the onset of this report and in light of the impact COVID-19 was having on local authorities, discussions were held by the then working group members to proceed with the report while making it clear to the reader the impact of COVID-19. Going forward into next year's report, the Secretariat would welcome any changes the new WG members may have.

**d) WG3 – Communications and Customer Service;**

*Stakeholder mapping exercise:*

The Secretariat confirmed that the Stakeholder mapping exercise will take place on the 14 October. Further details will be circulated by email, at which point the Board will be invited to confirm their availability for the event.

*Good Practice event 2021:*

The event is scheduled for the 9 November 2021. Discussions are ongoing with the LGMA regarding items to be presented. One theme suggested is the good practice by local authorities that arose after the onset of COVID-19 and which are continuing into the future. It is planned to have local authorities that haven't presented at the previous Good Practice events to provide a presentation. The Secretariat invited the Board to propose projects they consider should feature at the event to be forwarded to the Secretariat following this meeting.

*Customer Survey 2021*

The LGMA have confirmed that they have the 2021 survey underway and the WG would be considering the results of this and the possibility of carrying out case studies on particular local authorities as part of the work of the WG

**e) WG4 – Financial Management and Performance;**

*Audit and risk committee workshop:*

The Secretariat have engaged with the Institute of Public Administration to run an audit and risk committee workshop later this year. Further details including the date will be circulated in due course. This event will take place via video-conferencing.

*My Pay report:*

The LGMA have confirmed they have surveyed all the local authorities and have collated all the responses. The report is currently being reviewed the LGMA Governance Board before being issued to NOAC.

*2020 Public Spending Code Report:*

The report has been drafted and is currently being finalised and reviewed by the Secretariat before being issued to the WG4 Members and then the full NOAC Board for approval prior to publication.

*Engagement with the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS):*

A meeting has been agreed with the Director of the LGAS in relation to a review of local authority Audit Query findings which may inform areas that NOAC could focus on in terms of performance around financial management. Detail of this meeting will be circulated in due course. A meeting of WG4 will be organised to take place in the near future.

**5. Next Meeting Date:**

The next NOAC meeting is currently scheduled for 10am, 19 October 2021. South Dublin County Council are also scheduled to meet NOAC on 19 October 2021 and have offered to host in Tallaght stadium. The Board will revert to the Secretariat on their availability.

**6. Any Other Business:**

*NOAC Review Day:*

With the new appointments to the NOAC Board over the last year and the enforced distancing due to COVID-19, it was agreed that a NOAC review day should take place to review the Work Programme and the role of the Secretariat and Board Members. The Chair added that the Minister has expressed his desire to meet with the Board and suggested that the Minister could meet with the Board on the same

day in person. With the Board due to meet on 7 December, further discussions will be held to possibly arrange these meetings for this date.

**The meeting was brought to a close.**

Agenda Item No:	Subject	Action
1.	Minutes & actions of previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed and will be published on website</li> </ul>
4a.	Scrutiny Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of the next scrutiny visits to be circulated to the Board once agreed.</li> </ul>
4c.	WG2 – Performance Indicators Report;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following report approval, the report will be issued to the desktop publisher by 14 September.</li> <li>Secretariat will continue to check for final amendments before publication by end of September.</li> </ul>
4d.	WG3 – Stakeholder mapping exercise;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organised for 14 October.</li> <li>Further details will be circulated by email.</li> </ul>
4d.	WG3 – Good Practice Event;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event is scheduled for the 9 November 2021.</li> <li>The Secretariat invited the Board to propose projects they consider should feature at the event to be forwarded to the Secretariat.</li> </ul>
4e.	WG4 – Audit and risk committee workshop:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further details including the date will be circulated in due course.</li> </ul>
4e.	WG4 – Public Spending Code Report 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently being finalised and to be reviewed by the Secretariat before being issued to the WG4 Members and then the full NOAC Board for approval prior to publication.</li> </ul>
4e.	WG4 – Engagement with the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detail of this meeting will be circulated in due course.</li> </ul>
5.	Future Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board will revert to the Secretariat on their availability to attend the scheduled meeting with South Dublin County Council on 19 October 2021.</li> </ul>

6.	NOAC Review Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was agreed that a NOAC review day should take place to review the Work Programme and the role of the Secretariat and Board Members.</li></ul>
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