



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)

Minutes of the Meeting – Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 10am

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Meeting Platform

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members: Niall Quinn Ciarán Hayes
Brian Cawley Margaret Lane
Noel Harrington Philomena Poole

Secretariat: Claire Gavin John Goldrick
George Antonescu Darren Browne

Apologies: Mary Hurley Declan Breathnach

1. Minutes & actions of previous meeting;

The minutes of the NOAC main meeting from 11 January 2022 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;

A scrutiny report for South Dublin County Council (SDCC) was published on 28 February 2022. This follows a Stage 1 meeting held in July 2021 and a Stage 2 meeting in December 2021. This report includes a profile for SDCC, their presentations to NOAC and the minutes of the meetings. The Secretariat will circulate a link to the report on the NOAC website.

Following today's meeting with Fingal County Council, a report will be prepared for publication.

The next scrutiny meeting is scheduled for 8 March with Galway City Council. This will take place online and the meeting link will issue to those Board Members who wish to attend. Further scrutiny meetings with other local authorities will be arranged towards the middle of 2022 when there is available capacity by the Secretariat.

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

Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly Monitoring Report

The working group last met on the 3 February 2022. The working group has received a monitoring report on the implementation of regional, spatial and economic strategies from the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly. This included numerous extensive recommendations. The NOAC Chair has since written to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage seeking clarification of NOAC's role in Section 25A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 following its amendment and are awaiting a response.

Local Enterprise Office Questionnaire

A questionnaire has been issued to local enterprise offices to gather information on their role and performance before engaging further. The Secretariat will collate all responses and review before considering the next steps.

Service Level Agreements in local authorities

Service Level Agreements in local authorities is an area which will be considered for possible inclusion under the NOAC Work Programme.

Engagement with elected local authority members

It has been agreed by the working group that they will seek to have meetings with local authority elected members through their representative bodies, i.e. the Association of Irish Local Government

(AILG) and the Local Authorities Members Association (LAMA). It was agreed that the WG1 Chair and the NOAC Chair would meet first with the representative bodies.

Risk Management

A meeting is due to be arranged with the chairs of the audit committees under Working Group 4. WG1 will be requesting that risk management and cyber risk are covered at this meeting.

c) WG2 – Performance Indicators;

In preparation for this year's Performance Indicators returns, an online information workshop was held on the 23 February with over 120 data-coordinators and representatives from all 31 local authorities. The workshop included an address by the Working Group 2 Chair and presentations by the NOAC Secretariat, the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and Fearghal Reidy of the County and City Management Agency (CCMA). While more engagement was expected during the 'Questions and Answers' session of the workshop, queries from data-coordinators during and after the event will be answered as they arise. Further consideration will be given to receiving queries prior to next year's information workshop. The Working Group Chair expressed her thanks to all those involved in arranging the workshop. Draft guidelines have been circulated for the workshop and the final guidelines to be circulated with the date that the LGReturns system is open in early March. This year, data will be gathered on a test basis for two new indicators (*E7: Climate Change* and *J5: Economic Spend per Capita*) with the intention to implement fully for next year's report.

d) WG3 – Communications and Customer Service;

Since the last NOAC meeting, Working Group 3 has not held a meeting. The Assistant Director of the LGMA's Customer Service group has agreed to attend an upcoming WG3 meeting to discuss the Local Authority Satisfaction Survey they are undertaking and to look at the oversight role of NOAC in this regard. The next meeting will be held on 22 March 2022.

e) WG4 – Financial Management and Performance;

Audit Committees Workshop:

The working group last met on 19 January. An in-person workshop inviting representatives of the 31 local authority audit committees is being organised. This will be in a central location with

approximately 50 guests. Each working group Chair has been invited to provide topic suggestions for the event. The event will take place after the Board have their NOAC Work Planning Day.

Fleet Management Questionnaire:

The working group have agreed to include a climate change element in the questionnaire focusing on the carbon footprint of their vehicle fleet. This will also feature as a topic in the aforementioned Audit Committee workshop. The head of the Local Government Audit Service has been invited to the next WG4 meeting to discuss 'Value for Money' reports and the fleet management questionnaire in order to avoid any duplication of work.

2021 Public Spending Code report

The material to be completed by each local authority have been circulated with the deadline for returns scheduled for 29 May 2022.

Climate Action Plan:

It was suggested that a specific working group could be established to be involved with local authority efforts under the governments Climate Action Plan. This will feature as part of discussions for the NOAC Work Planning Day (for more see 'Any Other Business' below)

5. Dates of next meeting:

For 2022, the Board agreed the following meeting dates:

- 10am, 5 April:

This meeting is currently scheduled to take place in-person with confirmation closer to the time. The Secretariat will also seek to enable hybrid attendance for those logging in remotely. The Secretariat will revert with further details.

- 10am, 24 May:
- 10am, 5 July:

6. Annual Report 2021

A progress update was provided by the Secretariat. Each working group Chair will be circulated with the text specific to their working group for approval. The report is expected to be approved at the

next NOAC meeting (5 April) with a draft to be circulated prior. The report is statutorily obliged to be submitted to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage by 30 April.

7. Update on Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Following the receipt of questionnaire replies, it is planned to hold a broader discussion in-person at the NOAC Work Planning Day.

8. Any Other Business:

NOAC Away Day:

It is planned to hold the Work Planning Day in a central accessible location. The Secretariat will arrange a facilitator for the event. In order to find a consensus on a meeting date, the Secretariat will circulate a questionnaire seeking availability while also looking to facilitate those who may wish to attend remotely.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Subject	Action
1.	Minutes & actions of previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed and will be published on website
4a.	Scrutiny Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following today's meeting with representatives of Fingal County Council, a report will be prepared for publication. An online meeting link will issue to those Board Members who wish to attend the Galway City Council scrutiny meeting.
4b.	Local Enterprise Office Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat will collate all responses and review before considering the next steps.
4b.	Engagement with elected local authority members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that the WG1 Chair and the NOAC Chair would meet first with their representative bodies (the AILG and LAMA) before holding a meeting with the working group.
4c.	2021 Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final guidelines to be circulated to local authorities in early March.
4e.	Audit Committees Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each working group Chair has been invited to provide topic suggestions for the event.
4e.	Fleet Management Questionnaire:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The working group have agreed to include a climate change element in the questionnaire focusing on the carbon footprint of their vehicle fleet.
4e.	Climate Action Plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion will be held at the NOAC Work Planning Day with regards to the possible establishment of a specific working group monitoring local authority efforts under the governments Climate Action Plan.

5.	Next Meeting Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will seek to enable hybrid attendance for those logging in remotely. The Secretariat will revert with further details.
6.	Annual Report 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report is expected to be approved at the next NOAC meeting (5 April) with a draft to be circulated prior.
8.	NOAC Work Planning Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will arrange a facilitator for the event. • In order to find a consensus on a meeting date, the Secretariat will circulate a questionnaire seeking availability while also looking to facilitate those who may wish to attend remotely.