



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
Final Minutes of the Meeting – Wednesday 15th February 2023 at 10 a.m.

Venue: WebEx meeting

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members: Brian Cawley Noel Harrington
Ciarán Hayes Niall Quinn
Declan Breathnach

Secretariat: Claire Gavin Alan McDermott
John Goldrick Deirdre Byrne
Valerie Longmore

Apologies: Fiona Quinn Margaret Lane

1. Minutes and actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of 11th January were approved.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest

It was brought to the board's attention that a member has a planning application with Cork County Council.

Another member highlighted that they were a contributor for the website Local Government Information Unit.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Work Programme

Chair: Update on Scrutiny meetings – Mayo and Longford

An alternate stood in for the NOAC Chair at the scrutiny meetings in Mayo and Longford County Councils.

There was a full attendance from Longford's management team at that scrutiny meeting. They drew attention to the digitisation progress taking place in Longford. Of particular interest, Longford had the greatest population increase on the last census and is suffering from the effects of climate change and job losses, with the closure of a power plant, though new jobs are being sought by the Council to offset these.

The Chief Executive and some of management team were present at the Mayo Stage 1 meeting and, overall, where a number of areas were covered as part of the process.

A common theme for both Longford and Mayo County Councils are that they are experiencing housing challenges and difficulties in recruitment to their Councils.

A stage two meeting has been arranged with Cavan County Council, in addition to stage one meetings planned with Kildare, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Cork County and Wicklow Councils over the coming months.

WG1 (LGGER)

A tender has been issued for the development of a framework to evaluate the Monitoring Reports of the Regional Assemblies. Replies are due for the tender by 22nd February.

With respect to SLAs, a questionnaire is being devised, which will seek to ascertain information on the management and operation of leisure centres operated by, or on behalf of, local authorities.

WG2 (Performance Indicators)

A WG2 meeting will take place after the current Board meeting, with the main topic of discussion set to be the Performance Indicators for 2022. It will specifically deal with the preparation of the Performance Indicators Workshop on 8th March.

The Chair of WG2, along with the Chair of WG1, and head of the Secretariat, have a scheduled meeting on the 14th of March with Mark Griffin, Secretary General and Brian Carroll, Assistant Secretary, of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. NOAC wishes to further its relationship with that Department and, furthermore, to engage on Performance Indicators for climate change, as well as deal with the local government reform agenda. This meeting is in line with the NOAC work programme.

WG3 (CCS)

The WG is currently choosing themes for the Customer Survey, which will feed into the LGMA Customer Survey themes and focus groups for the 2023 survey. Additionally, the working group is looking to progress the Communications Strategy and suggested themes for the mini-Good Practice events for 2023 have been circulated to the WG via email.

It was explained that as part of the Work Programme and NOAC Strategy the LGMA assumed responsibility for the Customer Survey following the NOAC Surveys 2018-2020. In April 2021, a meeting with the LGMA took place where it was agreed that NOAC would retain an oversight role and would provide input into Customer Survey themes and focus groups.

The issue of oversight was discussed in detail. It was highlighted that the Survey is nearing the end of a three year cycle, with a review planned at the end of 2023.

It was suggested that NOAC could become involved in the year-end review with the LGMA as it would be an opportune occasion to clarify the oversight role.

It was also suggested that it would be worthwhile to compare the results of the Customer Surveys which NOAC and the LGMA have carried out.

NOAC may require going to tender to seek the input from a specialist in this area. It was decided that the NOAC Chair would discuss these issues further with the Secretariat and the Chair of the Working Group.

WG4 (FMP)

The 2023 Work Programme for WG4 has been agreed and the Working Group has been invited to a number of Audit Committee meetings. It will engage with the Cork County Audit Committee on 8th March 2023, Cork City Audit Committee on 15th March and Louth Audit Committee on 21st September.

Work has commenced on the Public Spending Code Report 2022 and letters have been issued to both the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and the CCMA. These letters are to confirm that no new or revised guidance has issued from DPER in relation to the Quality Assurance process for 2022, and to the CCMA to advise that Version 4 of the Local Government Guidance on the Quality Assurance process is the correct version for the sector to use in order to complete the 2022 Quality Assurance exercise.

Follow up with MyPay confirmed that all local authorities are now on MyPay except Dublin City Council who should be in a position to join this year. Finally, it was noted that the Working Group will meet with the Local Government Audit Service to discuss and review value for money on their audit reports.

5. Work Programme for 2023-2024 Update

A draft document of The NOAC Strategy and Work Programme 2023-2024 has been received from Sean Ó Riordan and feedback received from the Board will be incorporated into this document. It was noted that consideration will need to be given on the area of housing, with the possibility of the addition of another working group though this would not stop the ongoing work of the working groups. It was highlighted that housing is a major policy issue, as are other areas, such as the Ukrainian response, the impact of Covid, digitisation and climate change. Policy is decided at a national level and the Board needs to be up to date with policy issues in order to fulfil the oversight of local government.

It was agreed it would be necessary to have another meeting with Sean Ó Riordan prior to signing off on the work programme.

6. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is set for Wednesday 29th March at 10.30 a.m., to be conducted in-person. A stage two meeting with Cavan County Council will also take place on the day.

7. AOB – Update on NOAC Annual Report 2022

The draft annual report is at review stage for the Secretariat. The in-person meeting on the 29th March would be an opportunity for updated photos to be taken of the board members. Once the draft report has been cleared by the Secretariat it will then be circulated to the four Working Group Chairs for comments on their work areas.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Subject	Action
1.	Minutes of 11 th January meeting	To be published on the NOAC website.
4.	Work programme: WG3	A further discussion between the NOAC chairperson, Chair of the WG and the Secretariat will take place regarding the Customer Surveys.
5.	Work Programme 2023-2024	An in-person meeting will be arranged with the NOAC board and Sean Ó Riordan.