

Press Release

GOOD PRACTICE CONFERENCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY STAFF AIMS TO

BUILD ON INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TAKEN TO FURTHER IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Monday, 20th November 2017: The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC), in association with local authorities, is holding a Good Practice in Local Government conference on Tuesday, 21st November 2017 in Kilkenny Castle. Welcoming the seminar, Minister John Paul Phelan stated that the seminar was just a selection of the many initiatives taken by local authorities that highlight interesting, diverse and often highly innovative approaches to addressing the challenges both local authorities and our communities face. It demonstrates the ability by local authorities to adapt to the many reforms and how they manage demands and constraints, while continuing to deliver excellent services.

“Local authorities in Ireland continuously strive to deliver top-class services. This Good Practice Seminar is an opportunity to showcase examples of solutions-oriented approaches to providing public services,” says Pat McLoughlin, Chair of NOAC. “The case studies being presented illustrate the sector’s desire to improve efficiency in the service delivery, engage meaningfully with citizens and regenerate urban and rural areas.”

Speakers from local authorities across Ireland will present case studies, including the following:-

Monaghan County Council reduced the turnaround time for re-letting its housing from nearly 20 weeks to just 8 weeks thanks to changes in work processes and procedures. This included simple measures such as transferring to a paperless file system and using mobile devices to ensure non-office based staff had instant access to accurate information when and where they needed it.

Louth County Council has had some success factors in addressing vacant and derelict homes in private ownership. Louth County Council decided to acquire the housing by the Compulsory Purchase Order process. Once acquired, the Council refurbished them. This solution to dereliction and anti-social behaviour in a housing estate also made more homes available for people on the Council’s housing list. On foot of the initiative, some property owners in the community have renovated and rented out properties that were vacant up to now.

The introduction of solar powered compacting smart litter bins to address an inefficient litter bin service had excellent results for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. Web-based technology allows its team to monitor real time capacity and litter levels at each of its 400 smart litter bins. The number of litter bins was reduced but the overall capacity of litter bins was increased. The system has resulted in up to 85% fewer bin collections and operational savings of up to 75% for the service.

The social and economic regeneration of Kilkenny’s Abbey Quarter involves developing the former Smithwicks Brewery site adjoining Kilkenny’s medieval quarter. The project will create both jobs and high quality public spaces and is an example of the work of local authorities in cities, towns and villages throughout Ireland to regenerate their local areas.

Many would be familiar with Waterford Greenway. In addition to a tourism product this is part of an initiative being driven by Waterford City and County Council to implement a smarter travel initiative in the County. Dungarvan was selected as a Smarter Travel Demonstration Town, and following investment funded by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, the town has been transformed to support commuters who are walking and cycling to work and school.

Since 2014 the Skellig Region has been designated as an International Gold Tier Dark Sky Reserve. This is seen as a key attraction for an area that has experienced economic and population decline. Kerry County Council is working with stakeholders to enhance the quality of the experience. The Council itself is retrofitting the street lighting with dark sky LED lighting in the 700 square kilometre reserve.

Other projects being showcased include innovative approaches to budgeting by South Dublin County Council and digital engagement with citizens in Cork County Council and the research conducted by Kildare County Council, who worked in partnership with NUI Maynooth, to ensure their policies are informed by data is a fine example of the approach to evidence based policy taken by local authorities throughout Ireland.

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