

Minutes of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Meeting

Tuesday 19 May 2020 at 10:00 am

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Meeting Platform

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members: Sharon O'Connor
Constance Hanniffy
Michael McGreal
Martina Moloney
Tara Buckley
David Holohan

Secretariat: John F McCarthy
Neill Dalton
John Goldrick
Claire Gavin
Colin Flood
Darren Browne

Apologies: Barry Quinlan

1. Minutes & actions of previous meetings:

Agreement was provided on the following minutes from three previous main NOAC meetings:

- (i) *21 January Main Meeting Minutes;*
- (ii) *3 March Main Meeting Minutes;*
- (iii) *25 March Conference Call Minutes.*

An amendment was agreed to the minutes of the board meeting with the representatives of Waterford City & County Council (3 March 2020).

2. Declaration of any conflicts of interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest from the Board.

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4. Resumption of work arrangements

Since the end of March the work of NOAC was formally paused to allow for the Secretariat to be redeployed to help with the COVID-19 emergency. However, this has not occurred and the Secretariat has continued to work on NOAC activities remotely. It is also likely that remote working will continue until the end of the year. It was agreed that NOAC activities are to resume and that activities will progress as much as possible while working remotely.

5. NOAC Membership

There has been no update regarding new board members. The secretariat is prioritising this matter to ensure the continued work of the Commission. A new Statutory Instrument (SI) and Public Appointments Service (PAS) panel will be required following the expiration of the existing panel. Members enquired regarding extensions to membership in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and whether the duration of the PAS panel can be extended.

6. Work Programme (Scoping and Updates)

a. WG1 – LG Governance, Efficiency & Reform (LGER)

The WG Chair informed NOAC that a draft circular for the review of the 2015-2019 Corporate Plans has been prepared and circulated to WG members. It is expected that this will issue shortly.

For Corporate Plans for the period 2019 to 2024 the Secretariat set out the background and the objectives namely 'effectiveness of Corporate Plans' as well as previous work in this area. There was a discussion as to the possible impact of the Covid-19 virus on the Corporate Plans and the subsequent analysis by the WG was also discussed. Further discussion on this matter will occur in due course. It was also noted that the Secretariat is tracking the progress of local authorities in the completion of their plans.

It was confirmed that the WG will be having a meeting in the coming days.

b. WG2 – Performance Indicators (PI)

The WG chair briefed the meeting: -

The tenderer appointed for the researching and creation of an “Economic Development” indicator withdrew by agreement at an early stage and at no cost. As a result, the WG recommends the appointment of the next tenderer on the panel, Sean Ó’Riordáin & Associates. Approval was agreed by the NOAC board.

PI data collection for the 2019 PI report has been extended from April to the end of July. The Secretariat is working with the desktop publishing company on suggested improvements to how the 2019 PI report could be presented.

In relation to LA site visits the WG will carry out one remotely via videoconferencing and if sufficiently successful, further site visits may occur similarly.

The Secretariat advised the meeting that due to the boundary changes between Cork City Council and Cork County Council and its impact on PI data recording and returns, the two local authorities will provide a proposal to the WG to review.

c. WG3 – Communications and Customer Service (CSS)

The proposed new NOAC logo and associated images were presented to the full board and shown in the various forms they could be used, e.g. as a banner, on posters, as an email footer, as a business card and as a lanyard. Animated versions of the logo were also presented.

Overall the members were impressed and agreed that the new logo reflects the professionalism of NOAC. Of the logo images provided, the members wanted a revised version of the map of Ireland to incorporate the whole island of Ireland, along with the removal of the grid lines as it appears similar to other organisations logos. Revised options will be presented at the next NOAC meeting along with further developments on the new NOAC website. The members did provide approval for the current branding developments.

Regarding the Customer Satisfaction Survey Report 2020, the secretariat has contacted IPSOS regarding edits and presentation changes. The survey was carried out prior to the restrictions from the Covid-19 lockdown.

d. WG4 - Financial Management and Performance (FMP)

A working group meeting was held on 25 February whereby the actions from the Multi-Annual Work Programme were reviewed. Minutes of that meeting were circulated to members.

It was proposed to progress reports reviewing:

- Management of the MyPay payroll Shared Service
- Local Authority Procurement and
- Mortgage Loans and Interest only loans.

This would be over the next 3 years with one report per year. However, resources permitting, these reports could be released sooner. Mortgage loans and interest only loans may be reported first.

The WG would like to engage with the LG Audit Committees, if possible by video conferencing. A further report covering the overview of the Audit Findings for LAs was proposed. A board meeting with the chair of the LGAS was suggested and this will be explored by the secretariat.

The Secretariat will look at capacity and resources to complete the tasks in the context of the overall work programme. The WG Chair will look at the possibility of contributions from others being made available to the NOAC secretariat.

A further update will be presented at the next NOAC main meeting.

e. Chair

Profiles for scrutiny visits for six 2020 Local Authorities have been prepared and it is yet to be decided if these meetings will occur remotely via VC or face to face at a point in the future. A note will be presented at the June NOAC meeting covering progress and reporting options for each profile meeting since 2017.

The NOAC Annual Report 2019 is at an advanced draft stage and be circulated once received back from the desktop publisher. The report will be published in both English and Irish. Final approval for the report will be sought at the next NOAC meeting.

7. Update on engagements and meetings with other bodies/organisations;

Meetings between the NOAC board and the LGMA, SEAI and CCMA will be pursued. The secretariat will contact these organisations regarding the availability and ability to carry out these meetings via VC.

A board member raised the topic of regional assemblies being assessed with regards their corporate plans. While they have not been contacted, it was agreed that the subject would be discussed at the June Meeting.

8. Any Other Business

The next NOAC meeting was confirmed for 23 June and will again be conducted via WebEx.

The Chair wished to thank the secretariat for its work during the lockdown and for the organising and operation of today's meeting.

Meeting was brought to a close

Agenda Item No:	Action	Decision
1.	Minutes – NOAC meeting with Waterford County Council	Amendment agreed and will be amended by the secretariat.
5.	NOAC Membership	The secretariat will check out options on whether a time extension to the existing PAS panel is possible.
6(a).	New Corporate Plans (2019-2024)	A circular proposing the NOAC approach to appraising the new Corporate Plans (2019-2024) will be prepared and sent to all local authorities.
6(b).	Tender for new Economic Development Performance indicator	Approval given for the appointment of a new tender – Sean O’Riordain & Associates.
6(b).	2019 PI Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection extended till the end of July. • Secretariat working with DPC to suggest presentation changes to the report.
6(b).	PI Site Visit	One remote site visit via videoconferencing and if sufficiently successful, further site visits may occur via VC.
6(b).	Cork Boundary Change	Cork County and Cork City Councils to return proposal for NOAC agreement.
6(c).	New NOAC Logo and associated imagery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved logo. • Secretariat will request developer to make amendments to Ireland map imagery.
6(c).	Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020	Edits and presentation changes have been requested to IPSOS.
6(d).	Reports to be released	<p>It was proposed to progress reports reviewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the MyPay payroll Shared Service • Local Authority Procurement and • Mortgage Loans and Interest only loans. <p>This would be over the next 3 years with one report per year.</p>

6(d).	NOAC board meeting with the chair of the LGAS	To be explored by the secretariat.
6(e).	LA Profile Visits	To be decided if these meetings will occur remotely via VC or face to face at a point in the future.
6(e).	Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report will be published in both English and Irish. • Final approval for the report will be sought at the next NOAC meeting.
7	Engagements and meetings with other bodies/organisations	The secretariat will contact these the LGMA, SEAI and CCMA regarding the availability and ability to carry out these meetings via VC.
8	Regional Assemblies Corporate Plans	It was agreed that the subject would be discussed at the June Meeting.