NOAC Good Practice in Local Government
Virtual Seminar

The NOAC 'Good Practice in Local Government' seminar was planned to be held in Kilkenny Castle in April 2020 but was a casualty of the COVID lockdown. As a result, for it to proceed NOAC had to plan for its first ever virtual seminar. The event was organised in collaboration with the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) for 4th of November 2020.

The initial challenge presented by the restrictions gave rise to an opportunity to reach to a wider audience and reduce the time of the seminar as no travel was involved. NOAC was fortunate to have Minister Darragh O'Brien to provide the opening address. It was also an opportunity for him and NOAC to publicly recognise local authorities and in particular their response to the COVID-19 pandemic with technological innovations, altering services and business processes and adapting how they provide public services.

While COVID was an important topic and issue on the day, the seminar also heard about the varied and interesting work that is taking place in local authorities throughout the country and it gave them an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to develop novel solutions to many complex problems. The seminar is an opportunity for local authorities to reflect, share and learn from each other in the Good Practices adopted to deliver better services or to respond to needs identified. Some of the good practice projects and innovations discussed at the seminar included:

Maximising Performance to Drive Economic and Community Development in Wexford County Council

Wexford County Council's focus on Key Performance Indicators has benefited economic and community development throughout the county. Results have shown continuing improvement in the collection levels in the major revenue areas of commercial rates, rents and annuities, and housing loans as these were some of the areas prioritised.

My Open Library – Best Practice in Accessible Services at Offaly Libraries
This service offers extended opening hours to library members from 8am to 10pm, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Offaly County Library Service undertook one of the first pilots of this innovative service model in Ireland and now offers *My Open Library* services in Banagher, Ferbane and Tullamore libraries. A full range of services are available including borrowing, meeting facilities, study spaces and ICT facilities.

Drones at Work in Wicklow County Council
A presentation by Wicklow County Council on the increasing use of drone technology by Wicklow Civil Defence to carry out a range of tasks including national search activities, Civil Defence activities, Garda missing persons searches, fire monitoring assistance, local authority site surveys and area reports after severe weather events or flooding, and coastguard assistance.

Circular Economy Training for Small and Micro Enterprises - Dublin City Council and the Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan Office.

MODOS is a Circular Economy training programme designed for micro-enterprises and SMEs in Ireland. The pilot included seven companies. During 2020, the programme has been expanded nationally with a Dublin MODOS programme and a National MODOS programme.

Climate Action Response - Sligo County Council
The local government sector is critical for the implementation of national climate change policy at local level. The challenges led to development of a strategic plan for the sector, *Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030*.

Championing Culture and Creativity - Limerick City and County Council
Focussing on well-being and social cohesion demonstrate the potential of this innovative approach to strategically deliver on local and national policy. A focus on excellence in the creative process and supporting this across art forms, provides professional artists with opportunities to engage with audiences in communities and across generations.

Embracing the Autumn – Positive Ageing Webinar and Teen Talk - Cork County Council
In 2020, against the backdrop of a global pandemic, Cork County Council found innovative ways to ensure that the needs of older people continue to be met and their voices continue to be heard in the decision-making process around policy and practice with a freephone conference call facility. This has led to the development of additional socially inclusive initiatives for older people including the production of a positive-ageing webinar.

Teen Talk was an annual for transition year students since 2018, focusing on all aspects of health and wellbeing with a primary focus on mental health. This year, Teen Talk expanded further by partnering with 'Gen Z', which was aimed at the parents of the teens attending the Teen Talk events, supporting them with issues affecting teenagers in 2020. Due to Covid-19 pandemic the three scheduled events were successfully moved online reaching a wider audience with a greater scope to be more relevant to the wider ranging audience as the first lockdown was underway.

Future events will expect to have an on-line element to them. NOAC will also be organising other events in areas such as Customer Services and Performance Indicators.

All presentations, including videos and slides will be available on the new NOAC website www.noac.ie.