



# Kerry County Council Scrutiny Report

NOAC Report No. 32 - May 2021



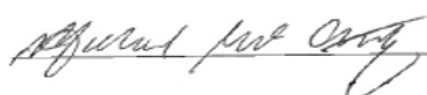
## Chair's Opening remarks

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 introduced significant changes to a wide range of aspects of the local government system, including in relation to matters of accountability and oversight. In that regard, the Act provided for the establishment of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) as the statutory body overseeing the local government sector. NOAC was established in July 2014 under the 2014 Act to provide independent oversight of the local government sector. NOAC's functions are wide ranging, involving the scrutiny of performance generally and financial performance specifically, supporting best practice, overseeing implementation of national local government policy and monitoring and evaluating implementation of corporate plans, adherence to service level agreements and public service reform by local government bodies.

Since I became Chair of NOAC in September 2018, I continued the good work that had been started by the previous NOAC Chair in meeting with the Chief Executives of the local authorities and their Management teams. As outlined below this process has evolved over time and continues to evolve.

The preparation of the profile report also identifies the performance of local authorities in relevant NOAC reports and provides for further examination of the results of these reports. The Scrutiny Process requires time and resources from NOAC and the local authorities in preparation of the profile report and for the Stage 1 and Stage 2 meetings. NOAC considers to date that the investment of time and resources has been worthwhile and necessary.

I have been struck by the welcome and sharing of information that has taken place at the meetings. It has provided an opportunity to learn, to listen to how the particular local authority operates, the challenges they face, the plans and ideas that have been developed and gives an opportunity to reflect on what is working well and areas that need to be addressed. It has identified areas of good practice and many of these ideas have been showcased at the NOAC Good Practice Seminars over the years. I look forward to continuing to work closely and collaboratively with all the local authorities and want to use this opportunity to thank all the Chief Executives and their teams for the time and courtesy and welcome extended to NOAC in this process.



**Michael McCarthy, Chair**  
20 May 2021

## Background to Profiles and Scrutiny Programme

In February 2017, NOAC, in accordance with its statutory functions, began to review the performance of individual local authorities. The starting point was getting an overall picture derived from the performance indicator report results, the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) audit reports, the financial position and revenue collection performance. Information on private rented sector inspections, housing stock management and maintenance data and Customer Satisfaction was all considered by using the relevant data contained in the NOAC reports published to date.

At the outset the importance of the meetings was emphasised over and above the data which NOAC had regarding local authorities. There was also an objective to broaden the NOAC members' understanding of the work of the local authorities and the individual priorities and pressures they faced and to put the information in context. Therefore, NOAC wanted to get the background perspective from the authorities and any other datasets that the Councils consider should be taken into account. Significant work is required to bring this part together and the work of the NOAC Secretariat and the local authority NOAC Coordinators must be acknowledged.

Following an initial face to face meeting, which is called a Stage 1 meeting, local authorities were invited to a Stage 2 meeting where more detailed questions would be carried out in the areas of interest to NOAC, including customer service and IT investment, collection rates, the quality of information provision to the public etc. These meetings would take place after or latterly before the main NOAC board meeting with all the board members present.

## The purpose

The process gives NOAC the opportunity to have oversight of all the local authorities and considers the factors that facilitates them in performing well, along with the barriers that may exist relevant to the individual local authority. The meetings enable the local authorities to outline their strong and weak performing areas. It allows for further examination of the results of the performance indicators and shows the results in context. It must be emphasised that these meetings differ from the Performance Indicator (PI) Validation meetings which are carried out by the Performance Indicator Working Group to interrogate the results reported in relation to selected performance indicators. These meetings, while very informative, are specific to the performance indicator process and do not consider other areas of performance that NOAC have oversight of, including Customer Service, Internal Audit, Corporate Plans etc.

During the meeting NOAC can see areas where consistent under-performance is highlighted and which can be examined further. It also allows for exemplars of best practice to be identified and used to share with other local authorities. The process as outlined, is not a follow up to the PI reports, but does enable consideration of issues that may warrant further clarification or investigation in the PI process. Local authorities have all indicated in the meetings thus far that they compare their performance and results in relation to what they deem as similar local authorities. This grouping could be reviewed further by NOAC and adopted for the results of some of its reports. Groupings are not only on size but, on levels of finances, urban and rural, staff numbers and other factors.



# The Scrutiny Process

The process has evolved over time, allowing it to become more structured, formal and documented. Given the importance of the work, it is led by the Chair of NOAC (or a delegated alternate, if required) with support from NOAC members and the Executive. The formal process agreed by the Board is termed as a constructive dialogue and is laid out below.

**1**

## Stage 1 (NOAC Scrutiny Visit)

Meeting held with NOAC Chair (or alternate) and/or one additional NOAC member and member(s) of the NOAC Executive. The Chief Executive and members of the management team, as invited by the Chief Executive shall attend.

- Stage 1 notice issued to Chief Executive of the local authority.
- Profile report prepared by NOAC Executive with input from the local authority. This is circulated along with an agenda to the local authority and NOAC attendees in advance of the visit. The report is based on general and specific information from NOAC reports relating to the local authority in question.
- Local authority to present on issues arising and take questions from attending NOAC members.
- Meeting minutes prepared and issued for comment.

**2**

## Stage 2 (NOAC Scrutiny Meeting)

Appearance at full NOAC meeting. The Chief Executive and members of the management team, as invited by the Chief Executive shall attend.

- Stage 2 notice to attend NOAC meeting issued to Chief Executive of local authority.
- Profile report updated as required and circulated along with an agenda to local authority and NOAC members in advance of the meeting.
- Local authority to present on issues arising and take questions from full NOAC board.
- Meeting minutes prepared for circulation to local authority for its comment.

**3**

## Stage 3 (NOAC Sign off and Publication)

Following completion of Stages 1 and 2 the Executive shall collate the material and present it to the NOAC Board as follows: -

- Final sign off on minutes / documents / reports.
- Comments / Findings / Recommendations to be made as required.
- Approval for completed records to be published.

## Progress to date

### 2017

To commence the process, profiles were prepared in respect of Cork City Council, Louth and Offaly County Councils and these were forwarded to the Chief Executives of the authorities concerned. The NOAC Chair at the time, Pat McLoughlin, began this process with a meeting with the Chief Executive of Louth County Council for a general discussion on the profile in August 2017. This Stage 1 meeting was followed by a similar meeting with the Chief Executive of Cork City Council in September 2017. The final Stage 1 meeting to take place in 2017 was held with the Chief Executive of Offaly County Council in October 2017. In December 2017 Louth County Council attended a meeting with NOAC after the main NOAC Board meeting. This was the first Stage 2 meeting, which formed an important part of the overall process. These meetings served a particularly important function which allowed the Council to give an overview of their work and also gave an opportunity to the full NOAC Board to put questions to the Council and understand their situation in more depth.

### 2018

In 2018 the schedule consisted of eight meetings with local authorities, four each for Stage 1 and Stage 2. A Stage 2 meeting was held with Offaly County Council in January 2018. This was followed by another Stage 2 meeting with Cork City Council in March 2018.

A new Chair, Michael McCarthy, was appointed on 24 September 2018. The process continued with Westmeath County Council in October 2018 and Kerry County Council in December 2018. These were Stage 2 meetings with the full NOAC board as in these cases, the 2018 Performance Indicator validation meetings for these authorities were deemed sufficient as Stage 1 meetings. Further Stage 1 meetings were held with Roscommon County Council and Tipperary County Council.

### 2019

The format continued with 8 meetings with local authorities during the year. Five Stage 1 meetings and three Stage 2 meetings. The Stage 1 meetings were with Donegal County Council, Laois County Council, Clare County Council, Waterford City and County Council and Carlow County Council. Stage 2 meetings took place with Roscommon County Council, Tipperary County Council and Donegal County Council.

### 2020

A meetings list was scheduled for 2020 to cover 6 additional local authorities. The year commenced with a Stage 1 meeting with Monaghan County Council in February, along with two Stage 2 meetings with Laois County Council and Waterford City and County Council. Further meetings were scheduled for April, however due to the COVID crisis these meetings were required to be deferred.

The COVID restrictions presented some challenges to the meetings but it was decided to continue the Stage 2 meetings virtually and meetings were held with Clare, Monaghan, Waterford City and County, Carlow and Sligo. These were carried out by the WebEx platform.

A socially distanced Stage 1 meeting was held in person with Limerick City and County Council in August and with Sligo County Council in September 2020.

### 2021

COVID has had a huge impact on local authorities, and in particular, for NOAC on the Scrutiny process. The Stage 1 meetings have all been held in person thus far and restrictions have allowed for no Stage 1 meetings to be held yet in 2021. The Stage 2 meetings have progressed as these were capable of being held remotely, with one held in January 2021 with Limerick City and County Council. It is hoped to make up for lost time as the restrictions are relaxed and plans are in place to commence Stage 1 meetings as soon as it is possible to do so.

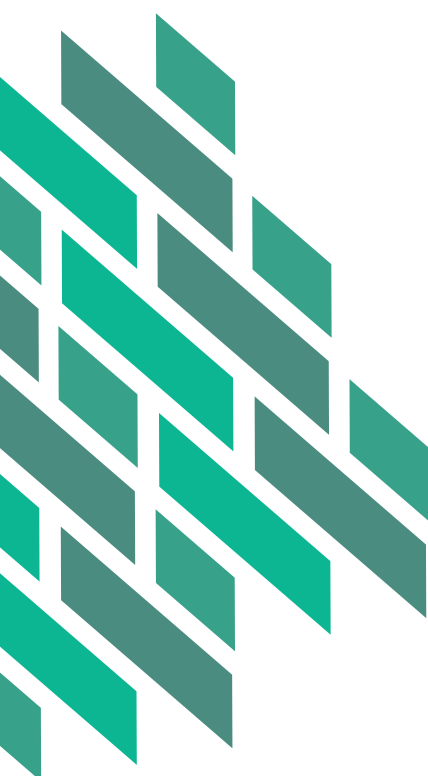
## Future meetings and reports

This report outlines the purpose and the procedures and while the process may continue to evolve it would not be expected at this time to produce another master report, similar to this one. This report takes into account the first 13 local authorities which have completed the process. It would be intended that once all stages in the scrutiny process has been fully completed with the relevant other local authorities that the report would be published on that basis and would form part of the suite of reports under the umbrella of the Scrutiny Report Process. Later in quarter 2, 2021, Sligo County Council and Limerick City and County Council reports will be published. It is anticipated that progress will continue to be made with further Stage 1 and Stage 2 meetings so that each local authority will have participated in the process. It must be outlined that significant changes and delays have been experienced due to the restrictions imposed by COVID in 2020 and 2021.

## Conclusion

The process thus far allowed for the NOAC chairman and members to get a greater understanding and insight into the challenges that face each of the local authorities. Also, issues such as collection rates, staff numbers, inspection rates, finances that are included in reports in some cases benefit from the explanation and discussion as to the reason behind these figures. The meetings also enabled NOAC to see the various priorities that each local authority considered relevant to their citizens and how they overcame various challenges and how they work collaboratively with other local authorities, state bodies and stakeholders. Areas of Good Practice have been identified along the way and these have contributed to presentations of these projects at the NOAC Good Practice Seminars in 2017, 2019 and 2020.

Kerry County Council did not have a Stage 1 meeting as a comprehensive validation meeting for the Performance Indicators was deemed sufficient in this case. The Stage 2 meeting took place in December 2018. It is important to note that the material in this report is reflective of the position at that time. Therefore any changes to the profile from later NOAC reports are not included in this report. Kerry outlined how in 2017 they established a unit to oversee the implementation of the results of the NOAC Performance Indicator reports and used them to assist in their budgetary process. The work in this area was considered a useful project to showcase at the Good Practice 2019 event.



# Kerry County Council Scrutiny Process

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# Kerry County Council Profile

November 2018

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# Kerry County Council General Information

Population:	147,707
Area:	4,807km <sup>2</sup>
Municipal Districts:	4 (SI 51/2014) – Killarney; Listowel; South and West Kerry and Tralee

## Council Mission Statement 'Putting Kerry First'

Through our democratic mandate we will lead economic development and build sustainable communities to make Kerry a great place to live, visit, learn, work and invest. We will honour the past and embrace the future, recognising our unique cultural, social and sporting heritage and our Gaelteacht.

### COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

We will pursue the betterment of County Kerry, through:

- Placing the citizen at the core of what we do and deliver our services with transparency and accountability and strive to achieve continual improvements in performance.
- The delivery of quality services and infrastructure for the betterment of the county
- Empowering communities to enable them to create an inclusive, sustainable and culturally diverse county
- Working in partnership with stakeholders to inspire, guide and positively influence the development of the County and its people
- Supporting and encouraging Local Representatives in their roles as advocates for their communities as civic leaders and as shapers of policy.

## Staffing

Number employed @ 31/12/2017	1,275 (1,078.15 WTE)
WTE Staff per 1,000 population	7.30

### Percentage of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave

2014	2.92
2015	3.30
2016	3.84
2017	4.33

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

While all Local Authorities have adopted a Public Sector Sick Leave Target of 3.5% (in 2014 in accordance with the Value for Money Report on the Management of Sickness Absence), sick leave absence levels have many variable and contributory factors.

The medium-term trend in Kerry has seen an increase over the last number of years due primarily to an increase in long term serious illness absences. In addition, the effect of the recruitment moratorium and the increase in the age profile of our staff in a contributory factor.

Rigorous procedures and systems are in place for monitoring and management of sick leave in the Council and all best practice approaches to the management of attendance and absence are in place.

Notwithstanding this, the trend has continued upward.

It should be noted that 9 out of every 10 days sick leave absences are due to medically certified illness. It should also be noted that this medical certification is used and accepted by the state for the payment of social welfare benefits in respect of staff with Class A PRSI entitlements.

Self certified sick leave showed a decrease in 2017 to below the national median.

## Budget

2019	€143.96 mn (€975 pp)
2018	€136.71m (€925 pp)
2017	€126.73m (€858 pp) 2016 Population

	2017	2016	2015
Rate collection rates	82.50%	81.30%	79.60%
Rent collection rates	92.60%	93.60%	94.10%
Housing loan collection rates	82.10%	81.00%	80.30%

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

The increased Revenue budgets in recent years reflect the new objectives and priorities of the Council. Income levels are historically strong and remain so in 2018.

## Housing Information at 31/12/17

Number of Dwellings in ownership of LA	4,086
% of LA owner dwellings vacant	3.14%
Number currently on waiting list	2,950
HAP Tenancies	427

Number of adult Individuals classified as homeless and in emergency accommodation	68
The number out of those individuals who, on 31/12/2017, had been in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously, or for 6 months cumulatively within the previous 12 months	14
Homeless presentations	2015 – Not available 2016 – 963 2017 – 1,387

**Note:** The homeless presentations include clients/ individuals who present multiple times throughout the year and children are not counted. Comparable figures for 2015 are not available.

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

The Housing Department provide a range of services to those in need of housing support. In addition to accommodation provision the Housing Department provides advice and other interventions across various schemes.

The Housing Department currently operates under the policy direction of the DHPLG as articulated in the most recent Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness – Rebuilding Ireland. There is a broad range of national schemes in operation and delivered at local level.

There continues to be a difficult and challenging housing market in Kerry. While we are beginning to see some activity in the private construction market, supply remain very low. The lack of availability of private sector supply with little or no additional units coming on stream continues to create operational difficulties.

The Council continues to carry legacy/ historic land loans some of which relates to land no longer zoned, affected by recent CFRAMs studies and designations and which have current infrastructural deficits. This legacy issue continues to be a barrier and risk to the acquisition of further lands to expand our delivery programme. Our programme out to 2021 envisages the use of all developable lands as part of the programme and while this will see the recoupment of some legacy land cost we will still retain a significant liability in this area.

Council Management meets regularly with the CIF and while they are positive to the work being undertaken by the Council (e.g. expansion of our own construction programme, amendment of our Development Levies Scheme), they have flagged that the availability of finance continues to be a major barrier to increased activity levels. In addition, the continuing capacity of the sector to meet increasing demands remain a significant concern.

A primary focus in the current delivery programme is the provision of additional social housing units under capital programmes supported by the DHPLG. In particular, the construction element of the programme is critical. The DHPLG notified LAs including Kerry County Council of our programme target in early 2018 – these targets were subsequently re-calibrated and the final programme targets for the period 2017-2021 were notified in April 2018. The revised Kerry County Council target for the programme is 1770 units (excluding HAP and RAS). For 2018 the construction target is 65 units and the HAP and RAS additional target is 433 units.

In 2018 the target total of 65 new units will be completed as part of our construction programme. The Council operates under challenging private market supply conditions. Despite this we continue to deliver additional units to meet our targets on HAP/ RAS and leasing.

In 2019 the Council will continue to advance the design, planning and delivery of further construction projects and will bring forward to the Elected Members the relevant Part 8 Proposals for the development of housing (including on behalf of Approved Housing Bodies where appropriate), as part of our Programme.

The Council continues to work in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies on the delivery of the Programme. This delivery stream is a key and critical part of the overall programme activity.

The area of homelessness and those requiring emergency accommodation interventions continues to be extremely difficult and challenging. The last 18 months in particular has seen a significant increase in individuals and families not only presenting as requiring emergency accommodation but also in the numbers facing the threat of homelessness and requiring assistance and advice. The people using our services and seeking assistance is not limited to those already on the social housing waiting lists. A very broad range of interventions are in place to attempt to deal with this area including multi agency cooperation and support in cases where accommodation solutions alone will not resolve the issue or address the underlying causes. This is a complex area with extremely complex and challenging cases a regular feature of the work – many such cases cannot be resolved by accommodation solutions alone or in isolation from other necessary supports. In addition, this area is being managed having regard to the priorities and established practices and procedures set out within our current assessment and allocation policies.

For 2019 in addition to the delivery of our very challenging programme targets and on-going review of our service delivery models and methods, a number of specific areas are also being prioritised (including but not limited to the following); -

**Tenancy / Estate Management** – this area continues to be challenging particularly from the anti-social behaviour perspective which is a feature of not alone Social Housing but also private Housing within mixed tenure estates. This area has been prioritised by Council and the relevant SPC for particular focus in 2019.

**Traveller Accommodation Programme** – a new Statutory Plan/ Programme is required in 2019. Advance preparatory work has commenced and the DHPLG guidelines envisage this TAP being formally adopted by Council in June 2019.

**Voids Programme** – it is expected that current national approaches to this area will change with a shift in emphasis to a more structured and Planned Maintenance approach. At local level the implications, analysis of options and funding approaches will need to be reviewed for 2019. Any change in current funding approach could initially have a negative impact on programme and programme outputs including turnaround of vacant units.

**Vacant Homes Policy** – this currently forms part of the broader Rebuilding Ireland Programme. A number of initial pilots are underway nationally in this area with a view to establishing and validating methodologies to attempt to secure the return of vacant properties for social housing purposes. Part of this work involves the establishment of the real vacancy rates in the pilot area. Preliminary indications and along with some initial analysis which has been completed in a small pilot area locally indicate that true vacancy rates are significantly lower than current CSO data sets suggest. Additional work in this area will be advanced in conjunction with the Planning Department in 2019.

**GDPR** – in addition to work and reviews at a corporate level particular focus for late 2018 and early 2019 will be on the impacts and implications in the delivery of Housing services including the services to Elected Members.

**Rents** – the 2019 programme includes a review of current approaches to Rents, rent reviews and Rent collection methodologies.

**RTB Inspections** – a revised approach to this area is under review nationally. The local programme approaches are being reviewed and it is intended that revised approaches will be implemented during 2019.

## Economic Forum (CEF)

There are a number of Economic Forums within the County:

- Economic Strategic Policy Committee
- County/Regional working group of stage agencies including Kerry County Council, IDA, Enterprise Ireland and the Institute of Technology Tralee. Established to co-ordinate the potential of economic development in the county.
- Business Leaders Forum – Kerry County Council has engaged with representatives of a number of key business industry stakeholders and agencies.
- South West Regional Action Plan for Jobs – Kerry County Council is a very active member of the South West Action Plan for Jobs.
- Destination Kerry – Multi stakeholder group led by Kerry County Council in relation to the development of tourism in Kerry and which provided a key role in the development, review and delivery of the Kerry Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the county.

- KerrySciTech – Kerry County Council is a founding member of this industry led cluster whose role is to attract talent and skills to the county as well as marketing Kerry as a location for investment. This initiative arose from the stakeholder engagement forum.
- Local Economic & Community Plan – Kerry County Council is responsible for the implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plan incorporating the Tourism Strategy for County Kerry along with a number of other stakeholders
- Leader Strategy – Kerry County Council in its role in co-ordination the local Economic Development Committee leads out the delivery of the leader strategy

## The Local Enterprise Office

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) acts as a one stop shop for small businesses in the County. The LEO provides advice, information, training and support to those trying to start or grow their business. In addition, the LEO provides financial assistance in the form of Feasibility Expansion grants. Financial supports are targeted at viable small enterprises in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sector. The LEO operates under a Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Ireland who provide funding.

## LEO Kerry – 2018 Performance to end of Q3

	Annual Target	Target to end of Q3	Performance @ end of Q3	% +/- @Q3	% +/- Annual Target
No. of Clients Approved Funding	34	26	25	96%	74%
Job Commitments associated with Priming /Business Expansion	50	38	130	342%	260%
No. of Clients approved TAME Funding	11	8	6	75%	55%
No. of Mentoring Participants	110	83	87	105%	79%
No. of SYOB Programmes	10	8	10	125%	100%
No. of SYOB Participants	190	143	171	120%	90%
No. of Lean Projects	4	3	7	233%	175%
No. of MFI Applications Submitted	14	11	14	127%	100%
No. of TOVs Approved	44	22	38	115%	86%



## Co-Working Space – Economic Hubs – “Invest in Kerry”



**Kerry is a thriving and connected location to work, live and do business with a vibrant and talented population.**

**DINGLE CREATIVITY & INNOVATION HUB**

Dingle Hub is a community collaborative enterprise initiative that aims to foster opportunities in a specially fitted-out office facility underpinned by 1GB fibre broadband from eir.  
 w: dinglehub.com  
 e: info@dinglehub.com

**SKELLIG CRI**

Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation is a unique higher education and community development partnership based in Cahersiveen. It is a space which is open to various educational institutes and facilitates the delivery of higher education programmes, research and practice.  
 w: skelligcri.ie | e: skelligcri@ucc.ie




### CASTLEISLAND CARNEGIE CO-WORKING

The Carnegie co working space in Castleisland has desk space for entrepreneurs and micro enterprises, established or start up. e: castleislandchamber@gmail.com

### SNEEM DIGITAL HUB

Sneem Digital Hub is a facility with high-speed broadband offering hot-desking for remote workers, video conferencing technology and meeting rooms.  
 w: sneemdigitalhub.ie  
 e: info@sneemdigitalhub.ie

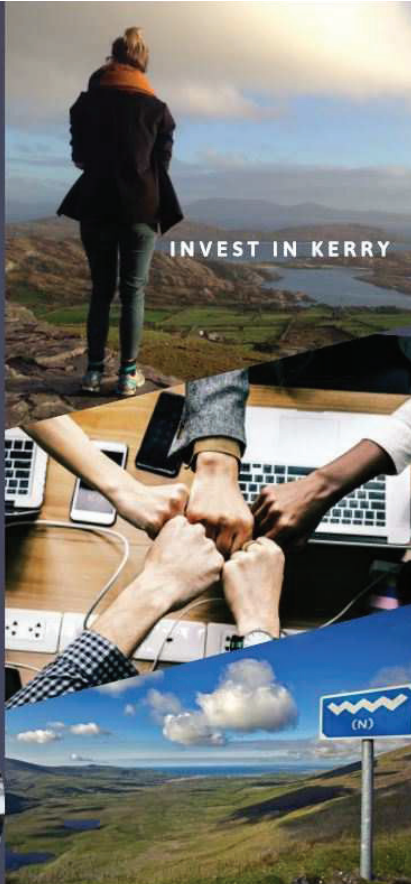
### OFFICE LIGHT CAHERSIVEEN

Office light is a shared office/co working space with customized facilities for Entrepreneurs, SMEs and Startups in a newly developed premises in Cahersiveen.  
 w: officelight.ie

**If you have a query on starting a business or relocating a business to our county, we would love to hear from you.**

Please contact Bridget Fitzgerald of the Economic Development Unit or Tomás Hayes of the Local Enterprise Office at enterprise@kerrycoco.ie for an early stage discussion.

Kerry County Council works closely with the IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland in supporting business development.

**INVEST IN KERRY**

Located in the South West on the Wild Atlantic Way, bordering Ireland's second and third cities, Kerry is famous for its beauty, natural amenities and entrepreneurial spirit.

The county is host to considerable business networks and economic infrastructure including the following.

**KERRY SCITECH**

Kerry SciTech was established on a collaborative basis to promote and highlight Kerry as a science and technology hotspot. It is an exciting and innovative approach by companies to source and retain appropriately qualified personnel.  
 w: kerryscitech.com | e: info@kerryscitech.com

**THE TOM CREAN CENTRE (TRALEE)**

The Tom Crean Centre provides technology and knowledge intensive start-ups with office space and business support services to build and scale an international business.  
 w: creancentre.com  
 e: info@creancentre.com

**KILLARNEY TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION CENTRE**

KTI offers a range of enterprise suites and desk spaces for businesses in e-commerce, software, multi-media, tourism, web and knowledge-based sectors.  
 w: killarney-innovation.com  
 e: george@killarney-innovation.com






### ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY BUILDING

Situated in Kerry Technology Park, this space incorporates 10,151 sq ft office and ancillary space and 16,705 sq ft manufacturing space. Contact: Ray O'Connor, Regional Manager, IDA Ireland South West.  
 e: ray.oconnor@ida.ie



### AGRITECH CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

A first in Europe, ACE is a new and exciting approach to agritech learning and research through e-learning and virtual reality. Industry-led, ACE will enhance the capabilities of Ireland's Agri-Tech businesses/companies and expand their reach and global ambition.  
 e: Fiona.Boyle@staff.ittralee.ie



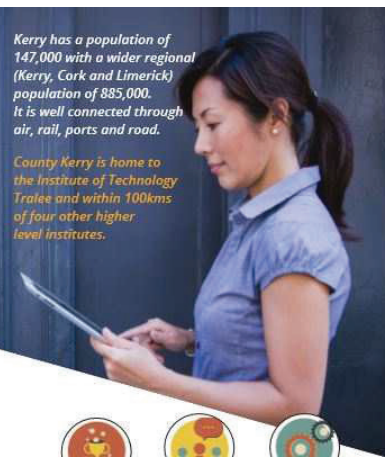
### RDI HUB

A first of its kind, RDI Hub will focus on digitisation, ideation and commercialisation of innovation and research in the fintech and related technologies sectors. Based in Killorglin, RDI Hub will nurture entrepreneurs, research and development and training in the financial technology sector.  
 w: rdihub.com | e: info@rdihub.com



Kerry has a population of 147,000 with a wider regional (Kerry, Cork and Limerick) population of 885,000. It is well connected through air, rail, ports and road.

County Kerry is home to the Institute of Technology Tralee and within 100kms of four other higher level institutes.



### HQ TRALEE & LISTOWEL

HQ Tralee & Listowel provide customised facilities and supports for Entrepreneurs, SMEs and Startups. Facilities include own-door business suites, co-working and meeting rooms, event spaces, break-out spaces and 1gb broadband.  
 w: hqtralee.com | e: info@hqtralee.com



## Retail Incentives

Kerry County Council has targeted the development, strengthening and ongoing support for Chamber Alliances throughout the county. New structures have been established in Listowel, Castleisland and Killorglin in recent years which have contributed to significant advancement of projects within these towns including the following;

- National Tidy Town winners Listowel 2018
- Regional Enterprise Town runners up Listowel 2017
- Castleisland Enterprise Centre completed 2018
- Killorglin Festival awards

The Council contributes financially to projects led out by the chamber alliances through allocations from the Council's community support fund, in addition to the significant support to major festivals in towns in the County including the Rose of Tralee International Festival, Listowel Writers Week, Other Voices Dingle etc.

The support of the Council has led to strategic plans for the development of towns being prepared in conjunction with the commercial and community sectors. Significant Regeneration Programmes have been initiated in town centres and these will be further developed in the coming years. Town Centre Health checks have been carried out in Tralee, Listowel and Castleisland and this has further been enhanced by the preparation of the public realm plan for Tralee.

The continued success of Kerry's major towns in the tidy town competitions with both Tralee and Killarney retaining their gold medal status over a prolonged period reflects the support and collaboration between the Council and commercial sector. Tralee was awarded the overall national award for best enterprise town in 2017 and the Council has submitted three further towns for consideration in the current year.

As part of the continued support for the Retail Sector, Kerry LEO runs a Retail Development Programme which is a training programme for independent retailers. This programme has been rolled out in Tralee, Listowel and Killarney to date and provides advice for retailers on effective product display, marketing, stock management, margins and other business advice. There is huge engagement in this initiative and it has been acknowledged that it was a strong contributor to the success by Listowel in the National Tidy Towns competition where they won the Ireland's tidiest town for 2018.

Kerry County Council carried out a fundamental review of its Development Contributions Scheme in late 2017 to prioritise the development of brownfield sites in urban areas and promoting the reuse of buildings through reduced development contributions. Through the development of the Local Area Municipal District Plans and revision of our Development Plans, Kerry County Council has and is continuing to identify underperforming streets within out towns and villages (based on vacancy rates). A business incentive scheme is currently being developed that will be applied to property that has been vacant for defined periods on these streets to encourage the re-use of property /brownfield sites with grant support to reduce vacancy. The Council is continuing to survey the health of towns and villages through the development plan preparation process, including vacancy rates and dereliction.

## The Corporate Plan

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

Kerry County Council adopted the Corporate Plan in 2015 following the Local Elections in accordance with statutory requirements. Following the preparation and adoption of the Local and Economic Community Plan in the intervening period, the Plan was reviewed and amended during 2017 to ensure it reflected the Objectives and Strategies of the LECP. New local structures such as the Local Community Development Committee, Public Participation Network and Municipal District Structures are also reflected in the revision to the Plan. The role and functions of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) and recommendations from NOAC in relation to Corporate Plans were also considered and incorporated as part of the Review.

In terms of structure, the Plan is founded on a number of Core Values, which guide us in all of our activities - Excellence Driven and Continual Improvement, Respect, Honesty, Integrity, Citizen Focused, Civic Leadership and Collaboration and Good Governance. The achievement of our Vision and Mission Statement is underpinned by these Values. The Plan sets out a number of Corporate and Strategic Objectives and Priority Areas and a comprehensive range of Supporting Strategies.

The role of the Annual Service Delivery Plan in translating the objectives of the Corporate Plan into more detailed supporting strategies/actions and the process for measurement of progress were considered as part of the Review and



included. Additional requirements in relation to Performance Measurement and Indicators and the inclusion of baseline performance measures based on most recent data available relating to outputs and outcomes across the range of services are also contained in the revised Corporate Plan, based on the current National set of Performance Indicators. The Council adopted the revised and updated Corporate Plan in November 2017.

The Council's Corporate Plan provides a key strategic framework to guide and drive the internal management processes in relation to the annual Operational business plans for each Directorate and Department and the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) at Team and Individual Staff Level. The Reviewed Corporate Plan captures the additional recent policy requirements introduced under the Reform process in Local Government and provides an updated strategic framework for the Council up to 2019.

The Plan includes a framework for the implementation, monitoring and review which will ensure that we remain focused and responsive to achieving our Corporate priorities in an ever-changing environment.

## Shared Services

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

The Local Government shared service in the area of procurement is a public sector wide shared service led by Kerry County Council working in partnership with the LGMA and the Office of Government Procurement. The Local Government Procurement Programme Board provides the overall governance and strategic overview of the Procurement Shared Service. Its focus relates to quality assurance, compliance structures, review of pipeline of work, and training. The Board meets on a quarterly basis and has representation from across the Local Government Sector and the relevant Department. This approach to the Local Government shared service model has been critical in promoting procurement reform across the sector and outputs and progress has been significant since 2014.

The Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) is responsible for implementing the Sector led categories of Plant Hire and Minor Building Works & Civil Engineering Works and is tasked with the development of central procurement frameworks and dynamic purchasing systems under these categories. The continued development of the locally created "Supplygov" procurement website ensures that the procurement process is on-line, streamlined and supports the delivery of compliance effectiveness and savings in an electronic environment throughout the public sector. The subsequent launch in 2016 of the National Pilot - wholly electronic Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS for Plant Hire for Public Bodies) facilitating online application, electronic evaluation, clarifications, and notifications was a further significant enhancement. Currently, the LGOPC through the "Supplygov" procurement website is operating 9 Frameworks and 2 DPS Systems with an estimated total annual spend of €500m for Public Bodies including Local Authorities, OPW, HSE and Irish Water. The LGOPC has over 2,900 suppliers engaged with "Supplygov" many of which are from the SME and Micro-Enterprise Sector. These Frameworks and the work pipeline are developed through identification of major categories of expenditure and public body demand and include procurement of Road Making Materials, Plumbing and Electrical Works, Asbestos Remediation, Ready Mix Concrete, Bitumen and Plant-Hire. A further 6 Frameworks in the pipeline of work for 2019 will be used across the Public Sector for Training, Road Signage and Minor Building Works.

The Procurement Programme Board, through its shared service approach, continues to promote compliance and engagement by issuing best practice guidelines, professionalising the procurement function, facilitating training and facilitating engagement with SMEs while simultaneously developing the expertise and continued expansion of the LGOPC in the development of frameworks and dynamic purchasing systems to meet sectoral needs.

A key area and focus for the Procurement Shared Service on behalf of the Local Government Sector has been on Procurement Compliance. While it is important that responsibility for compliance and engagement with the procurement model ultimately lies with each Chief Executive, the Procurement

Programme Board, through its shared service approach, continues to promote compliance and engagement, and to date much progress has been achieved which is set out hereunder:

- Appointment of a full time Sectoral Procurement Compliance Support and Policy Officer – who reports directly to the Local Government Strategic Procurement Centre (LGSPC) based in the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and whose Work-Programme is overseen at the Programme Board Level. The role of the Procurement Compliance Support and Policy Officer focuses primarily in the following areas:
  - Embedding of the Procurement Reform Programme across the Sector;
  - Engaging with the Local Government Sector to promote compliance and identify risks;
  - Engaging with the Local Government Audit Service;
  - Monitoring the use of Procurement Frameworks;
- The establishment of the Procurement Officer role in each Local Authority;
- The development and adoption of Corporate Procurement Plans;
- Professionalisation of the Procurement Function through the provision of procurement focussed training and the provision of bursaries for procurement qualifications;
- The proposed development of Quality Assurance Standard for the Shared Service Procurement Centre;
- The establishment of a Procurement Advisory Board which meets quarterly and consists of Procurement Officers who represent the Sector on OGP led Category Councils and the Chairs of Regional Procurement Groups, the LGOPC and LGSPC. Through this group and the quarterly Procurement Office's Forum, procurement staff share best practice, legal updates, stakeholder presentations and training.

It should be noted that a key recommendation to Local Authorities by the Procurement Programme Board is the inclusion of Procurement in

annual Internal Audit Plans. In addition, following engagement by the LGSPC the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) has committed to highlighting procurement both from a legal and policy perspective in annual Local Authority Audits.

The Shared-Service has targeted training and development on a number of fronts:

- Extensive Training has been put in place for Local Authority Procurement Officers and Directors of Services including the annual Procurement Conference;
- An annual assessment of training needs has been carried out and the Procurement Training Programme developed to meet those needs;
- Information Sessions and direct engagement with Buyers and the SME Sectors to ensure effective engagement with Central Procurement Mechanisms available – it should be noted that the Local Enterprise Offices were also engaged as part of this process;
- To date, in 2018, Training has been provided to 300 buyers in the Sector on the Construction Management Works Framework and training will be provided later this year on Construction Management and e-Tenders.

## Road Management Office

The Road Management Office is a local authority shared service and was setup in late 2014 following development of a business case by the Local Authority Sector, its approval by the Public Services Reform Oversight Group, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and the award of the shared service to a consortium of Donegal, Cork County, Cork City, Kerry and Tipperary Local Authorities. Cork County Council and Donegal County Council are the primary drivers of this service which covers road opening licences (Maproad Licencing), public Lighting and reporting to the Department in relation to road ratings/expenditure costs etc.

## MyPay

This is a National Payroll Shared Service operated by Laois on behalf of all Local Authorities. Kerry are users of the service.

## Regional Issues including new Developments and Initiatives

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

Kerry County Council has developed a strategic response to regional challenges and opportunities through the initial detailed analysis carried out in the preparation of the Local Economic & Community Development plan. This analysis subsequently fed into submissions to the Regional Action Plan for Jobs, the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The major regional challenges that impact on the county centre around the improvement of access to the major cities and national corridors through alleviating road traffic congestion in Adare/Macroom, improved access to the proposed M20 (Cork/limerick motorway) improving regional air and port access and providing potential for regional economic development through improved broadband.

In developing the regional response to the strategic challenges Kerry County Council has highlighted the Kerry Hub and knowledge triangle consisting of the major towns of Tralee, Killarney and by extension Killorglin as providing the key internal economic core of the County. This economic hub offers a sustainable, high quality location for investment, and a quality of life which has a positive sphere of influence over the whole County and beyond the county boundary. The Council's prioritisation of regional strengths in the areas of Fin-tech, Agri-tech and Tourism has been hugely successful, culminating in significant grant awards to two centres of excellence in Tralee and Killorglin. The Council has successfully engaged with state agencies, the education sector and industry in the delivery of these projects, as well as supporting an industry led cluster in marketing the county in the development of Kerry Sci-tech. Kerry County Council has also led out in the formation of the Kerry Stakeholders group and the Business leader's forum.

The Council has been to the forefront in support of the development of digital Hubs and co-working spaces in regional centres in the county supporting the development of start-ups and home working opportunities.

The Shannon Integrated Framework Plan provides a co-ordinated regional development framework to the Shannon Estuary Region including the industrial potential of the Ballylongford landbank.

Kerry is also aligned to the Atlantic Economic Corridor and has recently undertaken recruitment for the ACE Officer with an appointment being imminent.

### Supporting Strategies

In addition to National, EU and Regional Strategies the following Local Strategies are of relevance

- Kerry County Development Plan 2015 -2021
- Local Area Plans
- Development Contributions Scheme adopted July 2017
- Kerry Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022
- County Kerry Tourism and Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2022
- Local Enterprise Development Plan
- County Kerry Road Safety Plan 2016 -2020
- Kerry Local Development Strategy – LEADER – 2014 – 2020
- Kerry Arts Strategy 2016-2021
- Creative Ireland Kerry 2018 -2022
- Age Friendly Strategy 2018 -2022



# NOAC Reports Overview

NOAC was established in July 2014 as an independent statutory body to provide oversight of the local government sector in Ireland. NOAC's functions are wide ranging, involving the scrutiny of performance generally and financial performance specifically. NOAC also supports best practice, oversees the implementation of national local government policy, monitors and evaluates implementation of corporate plans, adherence to service level agreements and public service reform by local government bodies.

Since 2017 NOAC publishes annual local authority Performance Indicators and composite Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Reports. From the 20 reports published to date matters relevant to Kerry County Council are outlined in the points below:

## NOAC REPORT NO 19

### Performance Indicator Report 2017 – September 2018

The annual Performance Indicator Report published by NOAC is one of its key reports every year. NOAC has the function of scrutinising local authority performance against relevant indicators. NOAC believes that monitoring performance over time and against comparable authorities has the potential to encourage continuous improvement in local authority service provision. Kerry County Council was chosen for one of the validation visits in June 2018.

#### Housing

During the validation meeting Kerry highlighted estate management as a critical part of the work of its housing section and stressed the cost of which should not be ignored. Another factor that significantly affects its performance is the turnaround time of voids. Engaging contractors can be time consuming along with the actual renovation time to complete works on aged stock. It is noted that Kerry take the opportunity to do a complete retrofit on vacant units that had been occupied for many years and now need significant works to future proof the unit. Another key issue for Kerry is waste disposal. It has come to light that increasing numbers of

tenant's stock pile waste in gardens, attics and every available space to avoid waste collection costs. This has the potential to lead to health issues and increased costs to the authority. Kerry identified the need for training in respect of tenants with serious challenges who may not be capable of independent living. It suggested the production of a national tenant's handbook may be of assistance to all authorities.

#### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

The site visit covered a number of the specific Housing indicators and the approach and compliance of Kerry County Council with NOAC advice was dealt with.

The issue of the approach to Overheads particularly under the Housing indicators is currently under review nationally.

In relation to two of the national indicators the following points are made.

#### Voids

The voids/ vacant stock activity area forms a large part of the Council's housing programme. As vacancies arise significant and more fundamental refurbishment work are normally completed as the opportunity presents itself. This is a complex area with many external dependencies which can have a negative impact on turnaround times e.g.

- Larger scale works – where the opportunity is taken to undertake larger scale refurbishment work the Council is obliged to follow proper project management process. This normally involves not only the technical assessment of the required works but the preparation of detailed contract documentation and the undertaking of a public procurement process apart from the actual works/ construction period. This process takes times and does not lend itself to easy or fast track return of unit.
- Fire, flood, oil leak damage – these units simply cannot be turned around quickly. For oil leak damage a period of 18-24 months would be the normal period to restore a unit to habitable condition (public or private stock).

- Death of tenant – this is a sensitive area and an accepted norm in Kerry is a period of around 4 weeks before the house is vacated fully
- Power/ Electricity supplies- particularly pre-paid meters – significant issues arise with GDPR and transfer between supplier given supply framework in place

In addition, historically under the indicator data categorisation some difficult stock was allowed to be categorised as 'marked for disposal' and excluded from the analysis. This is no longer the case so units where there may be title, right of way or access issue they must still be counted for the PI although they may never be returned to stock.

The Council's Void management programme has been very active over the last number of years. Performance targets have been set and management reporting tools have been developed to monitor Voids turnaround times. To date in 2018, 101 units have been completed and returned to social housing use. At the end of September 2018, out of a net housing stock of 4,129, 73 previously tenanted properties (1.77%) were awaiting repair or were under repair county wide.

In previous years, approximately 78% of these works were funded by the Department under the 'Voids' programme with the balance being funded from the Council's Internal Capital Receipts (ICRs).

Recent indications from the Department suggest that funding under this programme is being reviewed nationally. It is likely that a fundamental policy change will occur with the emphasis moving from the current 'Voids' approach to a Planned Maintenance programme approach. Any reduction in this source of funding will have a negative impact on the Voids work programme and the turnaround times for vacant properties. However, in the longer term a more fundamental approach to preventative maintenance should reduce the scale of works necessary as vacancies arise and have a positive effect on turnaround times.

Given the level of expenditure in this area, the need to achieve value for money in repairs (to both our occupied and vacant stock) is essential. Given the scale of many of the projects the external procurement of contractors is necessary.

Procurement is carried out by advertising mini-tenders. Obtaining the most competitive prices from competent contractors ensures that the output achieved from our housing maintenance expenditure budget will be maximised. National Frameworks are in place for electrical and plumbing contractors and a Minor Building Works Framework is scheduled to go live in early 2019. Given the upturn in construction generally we are finding it increasingly difficult to source contractors and construction costs are also increasing.

It remains a priority of the Council to ensure the minimum turnaround times subject of course to appropriate works being undertaken to maintain and preserve the fabric of the asset. We have had some difficulties in procuring contractors in some parts of the County and some legacy stock has been slow to return to use. While recent trends have seen a reduction in turnaround times, as some of the more difficult legacy units start to return we may see a short-term increase and worsening of the turnaround times.

This area is closely monitored however, and the fundamental changes proposed and outlined will clearly have an impact in this area.

## Homeless Service

National policy provides for a regional approach to homelessness and emergency accommodation needs. The Council, as part of the South West Strategic Management Group has aligned the Regional Homeless Action Plan 2013 – 2018 to include the key aspects of a housing led approach to homelessness. Core to the Local Response are: -

- Preventing Homelessness.
- Eliminating the need to sleep rough.
- Eliminating long-term occupation of emergency accommodation.
- Providing long-term housing solutions.
- Ensuring effective services.
- Better co-ordinated funding arrangements.

The Homeless Information Centre (HIC) in Denny Street, Tralee is open on a daily basis and is operated in conjunction with the Department of Social Protection. This is part funded by the DHPLG homelessness allocation to the Southwest Region and the HSE. Despite this

area being identified as a more significant difficulty in the major cities and larger urban areas, experience to date shows that there is a continuous and significant increase in activity in this area in Kerry, with increased number of people presenting daily, seeking emergency accommodation or seeking advice and assistance as they are in danger of becoming homeless.

Kerry County Council figures show that the number of families presenting to the HIC has increased very significantly from previous years. The increased activity has required the Council to allocate units within its own stock on a short-term basis as Emergency accommodation and allocate additional local resources to deal with this issue.

Our performance in this area remains strong notwithstanding the continuing increase in activity and the on-going significant challenges being faced in the delivery of these services.

## Roads

Kerry County Council's proportion of the road network with few or no defects is the highest nationally at 45%.

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

Kerry has the 6th largest non-national road network in Ireland. There are 4,446 km of non-national roads in Kerry which represents 4.71% of the regional and local road network in the State. Due to the rural and peripheral nature of the county, as well as the high number of tourists visiting the County, there is a high dependency on car transport and a higher than average road network to maintain. The county

has 33km of public road per 1000 population compared to a national average of 20.8km and an EU average of 10.1km.

Approximately 12% of the non-national roads (537km) are classified as Regional Roads, with the remainder of the network classified as Local Primary, Local Secondary and Local Tertiary roads. The Regional Road network are the arteries connecting many of our towns and villages, as well as being important tourist routes, such as the Wild Atlantic Way from Tarbert via Ballybunnion to Tralee; Sleah Head; the Iveragh Peninsula; Kenmare to the Healy Pass & West Cork; Sneem to Molls Gap. A significant portion of the local primary road network are tourist routes, providing access to beaches, heritage sites as well as connecting villages to the larger towns. Given the strategic importance of the tourism industry, the connectivity between towns and villages, and traffic volumes, particular emphasis is placed on improving the regional and local primary road network.

In the 2017 Performance Indicator Report (R1), Kerry County Council's proportion of the regional road network, with few or no defects, was the highest nationally at 45% and a further 38% of the regional road network was classified as in good condition. The Regional Road network are the arteries connecting many of our towns and villages, as well as being important tourist routes. However, the report also identified that 33 % of our local primary roads, 38% of our local secondary roads and 40 % of our local tertiary roads are in poor condition. The following table gives a comparison with neighbouring and similar sized rural counties, where roads were rated.

Road	Regional		Local Primary		Local Secondary		Local Tertiary	
Condition	Good	Poor	Good	Poor	Good	Poor	Good	Poor
Kerry	83%	16%	64%	33%	55%	38%	37%	40%
Clare	86%	11%	71%	19%	60%	32%	31%	50%
Galway	73%	25%	56%	44%	45%	43%	32%	56%
Donegal	77%	23%	58%	39%	56%	38%	25%	40%
Mayo	58%	42%	40%	60%	26%	71%	20%	69%
Tipperary	80%	19%	65%	31%	48%	44%	24%	38%
<b>Mean Nat.</b>	<b>74.8%</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	<b>59.1%</b>	<b>35.9%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>54.5%</b>	<b>33.1%</b>	<b>38.4%</b>

This information is used to inform decision making in selecting roads for improvement works. The surveys of our regional and local roads have identified the need for significant investment on improving these roads. This is unlikely to be achieved over a reasonable timeframe, within current funding provisions, and it is estimated that the level of State funding would need to be at least doubled to bring our road network up to a reasonable standard over the next 15 years.

Kerry County Council was one of the pilot counties engaged in the roll out of pavement condition surveying in 2014. Since then, 97% of the Regional Road network, 88% of our Local Primary Road, 93% of the Local Secondary Road network and 77% of the Local Tertiary Road network have been surveyed and a condition rating applied. Changes were made to the surveying frequency in 2017, with an agreement to survey regional, local primary and local secondary roads every 2 years and local tertiary roads every 5 years, which reflects the variance in the figures for 2017. In total 54% of the Regional, Local Primary, and Local Secondary roads were surveyed within the previous 24 months.

There are recognized challenges on maintaining and upgrading the non-national road network in Kerry, including:

- Regular damage from storm events with rainfall levels in Kerry being the highest nationally
- Poor underlying ground conditions with many roads in North and East Kerry constructed on bog ramparts.
- Coastal routes at risk of erosion from climatic influences
- Challenges in identifying / providing quarries for raw materials, with large parts of the county designated under EU Habitats directives.
- The rural spread of the road network, with a high dependency on car transport, particularly for an ageing population.
- Significant haulage costs for bituminous materials
- High dependency on State grants to improve the road network, with limited capacity to generate own resource funding, such as from Development Contributions

## Fire

Kerry carried out an analysis of the Munster Regional Command and Control raw data and noted that in cases where there were multiple lines of data and where multiple appliances from the same fire station (or multiple fire stations) responded to the same incident, the first line of data was taken and this in many cases did not reflect the true response time. It also stated that broadband in some areas can be poor and this can impact on the recording system.

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

The Kerry Fire service operates part time fire stations only. The average time taken to mobilise is the time between a call-out (when the alerter is activated) to the time that the fire-fighters leave the fire station (mobilise) in respect of fire or non-fire call-outs in our part-time fire stations. This time showed an improvement in 2017 for non-fire emergency incidents. Issues with the base data being supplied for this indicator from the regional control centre were highlighted during the NOAC visit in 2017. The Fire Service attended 174 gorse fire incidents in the county in 2017 (an increase of 8.07%) and these are often in rural upland locations which can impact on attendance times.

## Other

New House Building Inspections rose from 9.98% in 2014 to 23.43% in 2017.

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

The Council's Building Control Section inspected 23.43 % of new buildings notified to the Council in 2017. This inspection rate is substantially higher than the 12-15% minimum requirement specified in the National Code of Practice for Inspecting and Certifying Buildings and Works. The inspection rate of new buildings shows a substantial increase over the national median figure also.

Cost per capita of the planning service rose from €19.67 in 2014 to €30.40 in 2017.

## Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

Kerry County Council attributes complete cost drivers to the planning services across a number of delivery sections including central management within the Council. These cost drivers reflect the entire operation of the service. The cost of the provision of the service is also reflective of the geographical size and topography, the peninsular and mountainous nature of the county, resulting in significant journey times to visit remote locations within Kerry. In addition to the core planning staff the Area Engineers in the operations sections, the site Assessment Unit in the environment section all report on planning applications and their time is proportionality charged to the service.

Kerry has significantly more designated habitats than other similar sized Counties. Approximately 40% of the Counties landmass is within either an SAC or a SPA, in addition to the amenity designations contained within the current county development plan. This has necessitated the employment of two full time ecologists to advise on planning applications and local authority own developments and maintenance works.

Kerry also has a significant quantum of National monuments, Archaeological heritage and Archaeological landscapes. This has also necessitated the employment of an Archaeologist to advise on planning applications and local authority own developments and maintenance works.

The exceptional scenic quality of the county necessitates an increased level of detailed assessment from numerous vantage points in relation to planning applications and local authority owned developments. There are also significant third-party interests in planning applications both from residents within and outside the county. The scenic nature of the county is a major economic driver within the county as well as being recognised nationally and internationally from a quality of environment perspective demanding careful consideration in order to ensure that development does not compromise the valuable economic and environmental asset.

Other additional costs are associated with Kerry's 63 caravan parks that are licensed annually under the Local Government Sanitary Services Act 1948 and the county also has a significant volume of

afforestation notifications from Coillte which are referred to the LA for comment.

Kerry County Council undertakes its own Strategic Environmental Assessments and Habitats Directive Assessments on all its Local Area Plans Strategy documents.

Cost of library service remained largely unchanged, as did the WTE staffing figures.

## Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

The number of items borrowed in Kerry Libraries compares very favourably to the National Values for the sector and when compared to other similar sized authorities. The average cost per capita of operating the Library Service in Kerry in 2017 also compares favourably with other similar local authorities.

Given the aging population in Kerry, the Library Service provide a valuable service to older persons. The Library provided large print & audio stock, book drops to nursing homes & day care centres and the Home library delivery service operates from Killarney Library. More recently, Kerry Library has provided a series of talks under the Healthy Ireland @your library programme, Computer literacy classes for senior citizens and works closely with the Sean Cárde Older Peoples group. Initiatives for 2019 include a link up with the Kerry Flyer Bus Service, with European Mental Health Week and provision of a range of Library induction talks for Senior Citizens. It is acknowledged that the library staff are often the only point of contact for many older people each day

The increase in online activity is as a result of both ongoing promotion, user education and a more enhanced range of services becoming available - e.g. a better range of e-books and e-audio books - which are made available nationally and selected by a selection group comprising of librarians. Input from county libraries is also encouraged. The availability of online services is built in as a part of all induction talks and made aware to users when they join the library. There was 67k users access to online Library services to the end of September 2018.

There have been 339 events held in Kerry libraries to end Sept 2018. These vary from lectures to exhibitions, book launches, children's events, the Kerry Arch. & Historical Society



lecture series, book clubs, etc. There is an annual programme of events, promoted locally and via social media and on the library website [www.kerrylibrary.ie](http://www.kerrylibrary.ie)

The Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation is a unique higher education and community development partnership between Kerry County Council, University College Cork and South Kerry Development Partnership. Located in the heart of the Skellig Coast in south Kerry in Cahirciveen Library, it is an outreach campus for higher education, research and entrepreneurship and a space which fosters collaboration and community building. A space which is open to various universities and educational institutes both nationally and internationally and which is facilitating the delivery of higher education programmes, research and practice locally in the Skellig Coast region and there were significant educational placements in this regard throughout the year. There are 2 years of the Diploma in Environmental Science and Social Policy course being ran in Cahirciveen Library. A number of research projects are being carried out in conjunction with University College Cork a sample of which include a Weather and Climate Citizen Science project and Men Sheds movement and it's impacts on social inclusion.

Website hits increased from 2,916 in 2014 to 9,789 in 2017 but this is still well below average of 14,632.

#### **Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018**

In 2017, there were a total of 1,445,888-page views of the Council's website. The national median in this case is 1,520,226. The figures quoted in the example above take the simple average which is total page views across all local authorities / divided by population and rounded to page views per 1000 population. The figures in such instance are skewed by the figures for the large authorities e.g. Dublin City (15,261,991).

The median is the value which sits halfway between the smallest and largest value and may be considered a more accurate reflection of performance than a simple average which can be distorted by outlier values. The figures for Kerry County Council compare favourably with the median. The figure for Kerry showed an increase of over 100,000 on the 2016 figure and we expect this trend to continue following

the launch of our new website in 2018, which provides for easier access to the various services provided on the site.

Kerry County Council continues to see significant growth in Social Media consumption – with nearly 40% more twitter followers and 33% more Facebook followers than at the end of 2016. Developing and expanding our use of Social Media has been a key objective, as both a means to inform and engage with the public. Social Media has been of particular value in getting concise information to the public at times of severe weather. Kerry County Council started using twitter back in 2009 and social media has been a key component in public safety messages going back to the big freeze of 2010, the winter storms in 2013/14 including Storm Darwin, the series of storms and flooding in 2015, through to more recent Redlevel weather events of Hurricane Ophelia and Storm Emma.

However, our Social Media channels, (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) are used for many day-to-day service notifications and to promote the very many cultural events taking place in the county.

In September 2018, Kerry County Council was awarded the Public-Sector Times – Best Website, IT and Social Media Award for 2018. Motor tax on line transactions has also improved from 59.88% to 73.8%, which is ahead of the average figure.

Motor tax on line transactions has also improved from 59.88% to 73.8%, which is ahead of the average figure.

#### **Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018**

The % of motor tax transactions conducted on-line continued to grow in 2017 with 73.82% of transactions in Kerry now conducted on-line which continues to be well above the National Median value for this indicator.

The Kerry Motor Tax office has been very proactive in promoting the online service and would always advise the customer of this option, particularly those who have contacted the Motor Tax office by telephone or letter.

In addition, there has been a general increase in ease of use of online transactions in Ireland and globally, with more people familiar and comfortable in carrying out online transactions.

The topography of this county is also a big factor, with customers from the furthest parts of the county no longer needing to physically travel to the Motor Tax offices. Improvements in broadband around the county have also been a factor.

Several changes to the online system itself have also helped increase user numbers to the online system in Kerry, along with other counties. These include:

**1: Improvements to the accessibility of PIN numbers**

To use the online service customers, need a PIN number. Previously if a customer had mislaid their PIN Number, they had to contact the Department of Transport office in Shannon for a replacement. Now, the PIN number for any vehicle is the last six digits of the Chassis number on the Vehicle Registration Certificate. The Kerry Motor Tax Office advises customers of this.

**2: Arrears**

Originally the online system did not allow the taxing of cars where arrears were due. This has now been changed and vehicles with arrears can be taxed on line and has been a significant factor in allowing more customers to tax their vehicle online.

**3: Availability of CVRT Certificates online**

Previously when goods vehicles were tested, the owner had to travel to the Motor Tax Office to get a printed copy of the Certificate. Generally, the customers would use the trip to tax the vehicle at the same time. Certificates are now issued online so that it is no longer necessary to come into the office and accordingly many are now taxed online.

Full figures for PI 2014;2015;2016 and 2017 are on page 25

## NOAC REPORT NO 17

### Internal Audit in Local Authorities - July 2018

Kerry County Council was one of only 10 authorities advised that their Internal Audits are undertaken in conformity with the Institute of Internal Auditors standards. In addition, Kerry undertakes External Quality

Assurance review of Internal Audit.

A formal Internal Audit term of reference, approved by the Audit Committee, is in place in Kerry. A compliance test was carried out in 2016 with regards to the operation of the Internal Audit unit against the stated function in the charter in Kerry with the results notified to the Audit Committee.

The Head of Internal Audit reports to the Chief Executive, Audit Committee and Director of Corporate. The LGAS in its 2016 Report noted, "The quality of output of the internal audit unit is of a high standard" in Kerry County Council.

#### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

Kerry County Council operates the highest governance standards with an Internal Audit function and an Audit committee. This is a high priority for the organisation and is reviewed monthly by the Senior Management Team.

Kerry County Council Internal Audit endeavour to comply with the principles of the IIA standards.

The Audi Committee conduct an independent review of the quality of our work as all reports are presented in full to the Audit Committee and the reports are subject to discussion and debate on the contents. The Internal Auditor attends these meetings, present and discusses the reports which is unusual in the sector.

The Internal Audit Unit endeavour to operate to the highest of standards and have the following in place:

- Internal Audit Charter agreed with Chair of Audit Committee and CE, reviewed in 2017
- Strategic Audit Plan 2016 - 2020
- Annual Internal Audit Work Plan agreed with SMT
- Audit Scopes agreed with SMT directing individual audits

- Procedures Manual
- Reporting 5 times per year to Audit Committee on progress with implementation of Annual Work Plan (both audit and checking programme)
- Regular reporting to SMT on progress with implementation of Annual Work Plan (both audit and checking programme)
- Tracker of Progress on Implementation of Audit recommendations
- Regular reporting to Audit Committee and SMT on progress with implementation of recommendations
- Production of annual report on IA activities for SMT and Audit Committee
- Presentation of audit reports to SMT and Audit Committee
- The Audit Committee meet on an annual basis with the Head of IA to address any issues of concern.

#### NOAC REPORT NO 16

### Review of 2015 Statutory Audit Reports to the Members of Local Authorities – June 2018

Income collection disimprovement -Auditors drew specific attention to a dis-improved housing loans or rents collection performance in Kerry. Kerry County Council's housing loans collection performance improved by 1% in 2016, which it attributed to the active use of the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process and it plans to include housing loans in its centralised collection process.

#### Housing Rents

2014	2015	2016*	2017*
94%	94.1%	93.6%	92.6%

#### Housing Loans

2014	2015	2016*	2017*
83%	80.3%	81%	82.1%

#### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

The collection rates for Kerry are very strong – they have historically been strong, and they continue to be so. There was a small reduction seen in 2017 – this arose from a particular local issue – the migration of nondomestic water billing and the subsequent full re-organisation of our collection services - but figures for 2018 show a slight improvement year on year from 2017. The trend has stabilised, and we are hopeful that the 2018 outturn will see a reversal of the recent trend.

This area is closely monitored and managed, and we continue to maintain a door to door collection approach where appropriate. We continue to promote, and advance electronic payment methods as the primary approach. Currently 82% of our tenant regularly use electronic payments methods (up from 77% in 2017).

We continue to closely work with Loan clients to address any arrears and all available resolution processes are being used to address this area.

The recent launch of the new Rebuilding Ireland home loan scheme will see an increase in loans activity and it does increase long term risks in this area. However, all appropriate governance structures are in place (credit committee etc.).

In summary our overall collection figures remain strong.

#### NOAC REPORT NO 12

### A Review of the Management and Maintenance of Local Authority Housing – May 2017

#### New Management Systems and Structures

Local authorities had recently put in place new systems or management structures to deal with this issue. Kerry County Council has restructured the Housing Section to focus on voids management and holds a monthly review of vacant houses and analyses trends on voids.

### Identifying New Tenants at an Early Stage

Kerry stated that they were proactive in identifying new tenants quickly and that this was a key method for avoiding long vacancy times. These local authorities tried to have the properties 'pre-allocated' as soon as possible, even prior to any works being undertaken

### Rental Income and Local Property Tax

In terms of the proportion of cumulative rent owed that was collected by end 2014, Laois and Monaghan County Councils are the highest at 95%, followed by Kerry and Westmeath at 94%

### Communication with Tenants

Kerry County Council gather information through: on-going contact with tenants, feedback from Councillors and through surveys carried out by Housing Liaison officers in certain estates.

### Contribution by Tenants

Kerry was one of just five authorities reporting the operation an annual maintenance service charge agreement with tenants. The Services provided under this charge are include Septic Tank maintenance and Heating maintenance/ Refuse Collection/Caretaker Service

### Energy Efficiency of Units

10% of the stock in Kerry has energy ratings

### Standards for Rented Houses

Authorities were queried as to the measures they take when an inspection reveals that a property does not comply with the Regulations. Kerry County Council advised that no action is taken where a tenanted house is found not to meet the standards.

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

This report and data is somewhat dated at this point. Many of the practices and approaches have changed or are undergoing further change currently. The move to a preventative maintenance approach has been highlighted earlier in the profile and this will significantly change Kerry County Council approaches in this area. Further structural changes in our approach will also occur into 2019.

With the amalgamation of the Town Councils with the County Council in 2014 some legacy approaches and practices continued. The service charge approach referred to in this report is confined to a sheltered housing complex only and not in widespread use or a widespread policy and practice approach at this point.

The number of Housing Stock with BER certification is significantly higher than the figure quoted. The data in this is currently being validation but even at this early stage 50% of the / stock units on the iHouse system have BER certification. Our estimate of the actual position is in the order of roughly 85% of stock have a BER certificate. Work on the completion of the validation and population of this data to iHouse is planned.

	2017	2016	2015	2014
Average time from vacation date to PI year reletting date (weeks)	28.45	38.89	42.27	48.84
Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	€16,320.33	€10,474.25	€10,521.94	€17,888.28
Average repair and maintenance cost per unit	€698.17	€569.69	€577.20	€529.91

## NOAC REPORT NO 10

## Rented Houses Inspections – A Review of Local Authority Performance of Private Rented Houses Regulations Functions October 2016

	2014	2017
Number of Registered Tenancies	7,156	7,971
Expenditure on Private Rented Sector Functions in 2014	€102,725	no longer applicable
% Units inspected	9.8%	8.65%
Inspected Failed %	32.1%	81.45%
Costs of non-Local Authority staff carrying out inspections	€26,281	no longer applicable

Data from report relates to 2014, data for 2017 taken from Performance Indicator Report

### Update from Kerry County Council - November 2018

For 2017, the data indicated does not form part of the national indicator and is not collected centrally.

This area is currently under review nationally with the fundamental approach likely to change.

At local level the area is also under review given the retirement of a number of inspection staff in 2018. We are currently in the process of recruiting replacement and additional staff in this area. For this reason, it is likely in the short term that for 2018 we will see a reduction in activity and performance in this area.

The current approaches are under review and in conjunction with the strengthening of inspection resources in early 2019 activity should return to target levels.

## NOAC REPORT NO 8

## Financial Performance of Local Authorities 2013-2015: Deficits, Audit Opinion and Financial Statements – April 2016

Revenue Balance – Kerry	General Revenue Balance	Income	Balance as % Income
2013	€3,035,261	€114,986,777	2.64%
2014	€6,184,008	€132,523,502	4.67%
2015	€6,271,768	€125,309,282	5.01%
2015	€6,355,246	€135,016,833	4.71%

*\*Updated data not included in Original report*

Kerry was compliant with requirement for the submission of AFS by the deadline of 31st March each year in 2013 and 2015. It was noted that the late year – 2014 – was more than likely attributable to that being the first year of preparing the AFS to include the accounts of the dissolved Town and Borough Councils. The 2016 AFS was signed on 11th April 2017. The 2017 AFS has not been published on the council's website the link to the 2017 AFS links to the 2016 AFS.

Note: The reason AFS 2016 was signed on 11th April 2017 was due to issue of Department Circular in which resulted in changes to Accounting Treatment (Circular Fin 04 /2017) and changes to the Annual Financial Statement. Prior to the late issue of the Circular, the Council had completed its AFS and submitted it to the Department by 30th March. This circular was dated 7th April 2017.

The link to the 2017 AFS on the Council's Website has now been corrected by IT.



	Performance Indicators	2017		2016		2015		2014	
		Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average
H1	Social Housing provided in year per 1,000 population	0.43	0.53	n/a	3.43	1.61	1.91	0.99	0.80
H2	% of directly provided dwellings vacant at 31/12	3.14	2.73	3.58	3.02	3.94	3.5	3.44	3.8
H3a	Average time from vacation date to PI year re-letting date (weeks)	28.45	28.9	38.89	32.99	42.27	28.43	48.84	31.43
H3b	Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	€16,320.33	€17,160.60	10,474.25	€15,877	10,521.94	€13,378.40	17,888.28	€11,534.91
H4	Average repair and maintenance cost per unit	€698.17	€1,311.82	569.69	€1,500.23	577.20	€1,292.57	529.91	€1,272.30
H5	Inspections (Dwellings inspected in 2016) carried out in year as % of registrations	8.66	4.96	10.64	4.36	27.52	5.64	9.98	6.51
R1a	% Regional Road KM that ever received a PSCI rating	95	96	97.00	99	94.00	68	75.69	47.9
R1b	% Total Regional Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	45	28	41.00	30	36.--	20	32.00	11.15
R1c	% Total Primary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	26	20	22.00	13	20.00	11	19.10	6.4
R1d	% Total Secondary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	21	14	18.00	10	12.00	8	11.20	4.61
R1e	% Total Tertiary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	12	8	10.00	7	7.00	5	8.30	3.63
R2a	KM Regional Road strengthened using road improvement grants	14.50	10.3	13.50	10.8	24.20	10.2		
R2b	KM Regional road resealed using road maintenance grants	19.70	11.9	20.90	12.2	12.50	8.3		
R2/3	% Motor tax transactions performed online	73.82	65.95	72.26	64.05	66.11	56.6	59.88	54.7
W1	% private schemes with water quality in compliance	96.58	98.46	97.28	97.77	96.53	99.07	93.80	97.9
E1	% households availing of a 3-bin service	43.66	39.53	41.95	37.7	44.24	34.87	27.65	31.66
E2	Pollution cases on hand at year end as % of the cases that arose that year	14.41	9.79	43.83	9.91	1.55	8.49		
E3	% area unpolluted or litter free	25	10	20.00	13	19.00	14	19.00	9.5
P1	New buildings inspected as % of new buildings notified	23.43	17	13.81	19.42	50.00	24	9.98	17.71
P2	% of determinations that confirmed the decision made by LA	74.14	79	58.33	77.78	63.54	71.88	46.51	71.7
P3	Ratio of planning cases being investigated at year end as to cases closed	1.99	2.41	2.03	2.87	2.19	2.61	2.79	2.88
P4	Cost per capita of the Planning Service	€30.30	28.31	30.52	€26.96	31.44	€26.76	19.67	€25.27
F1	Cost per capita of Fire Service (based on 2011 Census for 2014 and 2015)	€43.73	57.74	44.79	€56.07	45.32	€57.88	46.90	€55.9
F2	Average time to mobilise Brigade re Fire (Minutes) (FT)	N/A	1.45	n/a	1.5	N/A	1.6	N/A	1.66
F3	% of Fire Cases in which first attendance is within 10 minutes	26.35	40.45	32.03	57.79	28.13	56.98	31.60	58.6
L1a	No. of Library visits per head of population	3.1	3.56	3.24	3.61	3.46	3.68	3.62	3.71
L1b	No. of Items borrowed per head of population	3.39	2.92	4.81	3.82	4.44	3.82		
L2	Cost of Library Service per capita	24.59	31.00	25.28	€30.05	23.03	€30.02	25.48	€29.41
Y1	% of local schools involved in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme	88.00	69.04	88.00	68.07	88.46	67.59	67.74	51.86
C1	WTE staff per 1,000 population	7.30	5.75	7.32	5.64	7.31	5.58	7.22	5.63
C2a	% of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave in year	4.33	3.74	3.84	3.76	3.30	3.52	2.92	3.34
C2b	% of paid working days lost to self-certified sick leave in year	0.28	0.33	0.33	0.38	0.29	0.39	0.29	0.4
C3	LA website page views per 1,000 population	9,789	14,632	8,938.81	12,422	7,825.73	11,666	2,916.15	9,651
C4	Overall cost of ICT Provision per WTE	€2,633.64	€3,048.41	2,436.63	€2,675.69	2,380.50	€2,680.15	2,274.00	€2,646.8
M2a	% Commercial Rates Collected in year	82.5	83	81.30	82.3	79.60	83	78.00	77
M2b	% Rent & Annuities Collected in year	92.6	89	93.60	88.0	94.10	85	95.00	84
M2c	% Housing Loans Collected in year	82.10	74	81.00	70	80.30	68	83.00	67
J1	LEO jobs output per 1,000 population	.047	0.68	0.62	0.7	0.85	0.66	0.42	0.73

Per population based on census figures for 2011 and 2016 (145,502 in 2011 and 147,707 in 2016)

The rest of the profile has been provided to NOAC but due to its in-depth nature, contains more information than is required for this report.



# Stage 1 meeting

No formal Stage 1 meeting was held with Kerry.



## Stage 2 meeting

### National Oversight and Audit Commission Meeting with Kerry County Council

Date:	4 December 2018	
Venue:	Custom House, Dublin 1	
Attendees:	<b>Chairman:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Michael McCarthy</li> </ul> <b>Members:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Lemass</li> <li>Connie Hanniffy</li> <li>John Buckley</li> <li>Michael McGreal</li> <li>Dave Holohan</li> <li>Martina Moloney</li> <li>Sharon O'Connor</li> <li>Colleen Savage</li> </ul> <b>Secretariat:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claire Gavin</li> <li>Neill Dalton</li> <li>Colin Flood</li> <li>Ken Doyle</li> </ul> <b>Apologies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tara Buckley</li> </ul>	<b>Kerry County Council:</b> <b>Chief Executive:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moira Murrell</li> </ul> <b>Members:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charlie O'Sullivan</li> <li>Martin O'Donoghue</li> <li>Michal Scannell</li> <li>Angela McAllen</li> <li>John Breen</li> <li>Kathleen Moriarty</li> </ul>

The Chair welcomed the Chief Executive and the senior management team to the meeting. A comprehensive briefing document was then circulated to all NOAC members and the Chief Executive provided an update to the group on matters concerning the Council and the challenges that they face. Issues covered included: Local Economic Plan, Air and Road Connectivity, Digital Hubs, Tourism, Regeneration, Establishment of Municipal Districts, Emergency Planning, Finances (including legacy land loans of circa €36m) and the effect that a change in Airbnb rules may have on housing. The Chief Executive and Senior Management team then proceeded to answer questions from the NOAC members.

## Housing

The Board enquired about the makeup of 65 new homes in Kerry, how the Development contribution levies are targeted towards regeneration, how issues around land acquisition and voids are being addressed.

The Council advised that the 65 new homes are direct build houses in two estates with 20 units from a number of other schemes.

The Council has targeted the development levy on the size of property being constructed, smaller town house type properties would have a levy in the region of €1,500 while larger properties could be up to €5,000. The Council also offers incentives to develop brown field sites within town lands as well as reductions if public amenities such as car parking are provided within the scheme being developed.

The Council did reserve the services of a contractor to undertake all repairs to their stock. They represented good value for money and recently had its contract extended. The Council also advised that a small number of staff were on hand to deal with emergencies.

The Council advised that the low turnaround time in these properties was due to a special focus on the issue and a significant investment from the Council. It remains a challenge to find the internal funding to continue this practice.

In relation to the local authorities' approach to difficult mortgages, the Council advised that the HFA allowed them to offer interest only and Mortgage to Rent Scheme as a means to help residents in mortgage arrears. The Council also confirmed the shared ownership scheme was not a success and there are a small number of loans with high arrears.

The Board enquired if the Council were aware of the impact of Airbnb rentals on available housing stock. Kerry confirmed that on one night between 5 towns it would have 850 Airbnb units. Dingle accounts for 341 of these.

The Board asked if there is an awareness of the Rebuilding Ireland fund. The Council stated that finance for small to medium builder's remains challenging and based on today's market conditions it is cheaper to buy (€140 to €190k) than build (€200 to €220k).

The NOAC Chair commended their efforts and said they were a beacon for other Local Authorities to follow.

## Commercial Rates

The Board asked about the Council's plans for commercial rates.

The Council has strived to increase and maximise its collection from Commercial Rates. Collection levels have increased from 77.6% in 2014 to 82.5% in 2017. Following the amalgamation of the four Local Authorities in 2014, Kerry County Council assumed the commercial rate accounts of the three former Town Councils. This had an impact on the overall collection percentage as the larger towns of Tralee and Killarney historically had lower collection rates and higher debtors. A centralised approach was introduced in order to streamline rates collection and debt management in 2014.

The impact of the economic downturn has also affected rates collection levels, the Council's approach to debt management is to work pro-actively with ratepayers in difficulty and to utilise all available options to pursue debts. There are 2,100 ratepayers in Kerry and the Council works at all times to maximise collections.

In 2017, Kerry County Council exceeded the National Target under the Debt Management Project. The rates collection target for 2018 is 84.55% and the Council is on target to achieve this. The Medium term target for rates is 90%.

## LEOs

The Board asked about LEOs and the business incentives provided to the retail sector.

The Council discussed details of the range of supports provided by the Local Enterprise Office which is a one-stop shop for small businesses in the county. LEO provides training, advice, information and support to those trying to start or grow their business. Financial supports are targeted at viable small enterprises in manufacturing and internationally traded services sector. It also works with the retail sector as part of the Retail Programme.

The turnover of the Online Trading Vouchers has doubled. The Council advised that it works with other LEOs in the midlands to encourage small to mid-sized engineering firms and that it supports the Irish Manufacturing Initiative. The Council advised that 19 parties took up the micro exporter grant.

## Procurement

The Board noted that Kerry had shown best practice in this area and asked it to elaborate.

Kerry County Council operates the national procurement shared service working in partnership with the LGMA and the Office of Government Procurement. The Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) is responsible for implementing the Sector led categories of Plant Hire and Minor Building Works and Civil Engineering Works and develops central procurement frameworks and dynamic purchasing systems under these categories. 26 staff are employed in the LGOPC and it is represented on the Office of Government Procurement Executive Committee. Governance arrangements are in place to ensure best practice is maintained in its operations.

## Waste

The Board asked if the Council has a fund for landfill liabilities and to elaborate on how they performed better than other counties under the 3 bin performance indicator. Kerry confirmed that it has been providing financially for long term landfill liabilities and aftercare costs. The Council has a regulatory and enforcement role in waste collection and works with Waste Operators in Kerry to ensure compliance with the 3-bin requirement. The number and percentage of households availing of a 3 bin service in Kerry is above the National Median for out-turns in this area and continues to grow.

## Airport

The Board acknowledged the importance of Kerry airport and enquired as to what relationship the Council had in managing it.

The Council confirmed it advocates for the importance for the airport and gave an example that showed one route, from Berlin, provides additional income in the year of approximately €4m. The Council emphasised the link between Kerry and Shannon Airport for air access and impact on connectivity.

## Economic Development

The Board noted that Kerry has moved from being an infrastructure provider to advocates of the county and enquired as to what challenges it faced.

The Council confirmed that it has appointed an Economic Development Officer leading the implementation of various economic initiatives and strategies and working in collaboration with key stakeholders and State Agencies. There are a number of economic forums in operation in the county, for example, South West Action Plan for Jobs, Destination Kerry Tourism, Kerry SciTech and the Economic Strategic Policy Committee which are advancing economic development across the county.

## Finance

The Board asked the Council to confirm if the Council's Balance on the Capital Account at 31/12/2017 of €52m includes all provisions and if the Council believed it might be better to collate individuals' provision into one combined figure. The Council stated that they each have their own classifications and they are presented this way as for certain headings there may not be any movements for many years as they are set aside for a particular reason.

The Board asked what model is used for the Tralee Agri Hub. The Council confirmed it was set up like a partnership model.

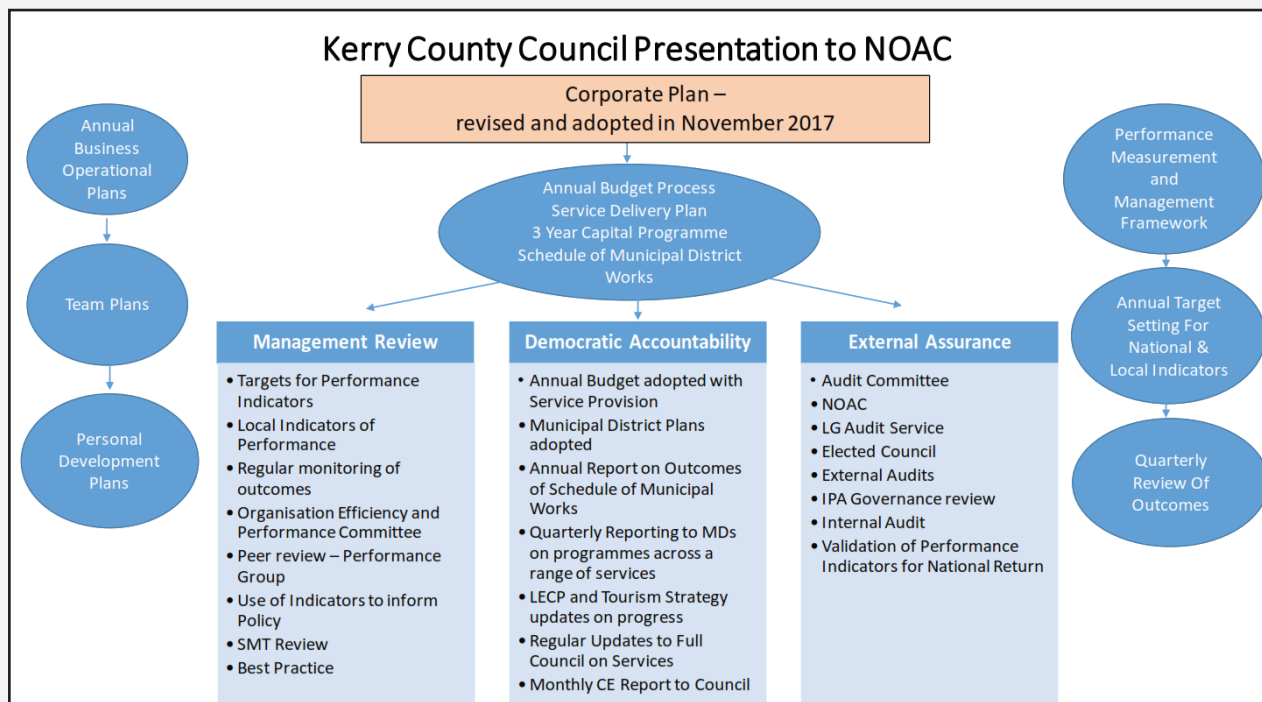
## Conclusion

The NOAC Chair thanked the Chief Executive and the management team for coming in to meet with NOAC and for providing valuable insight into the work of the Council.



## 3

## Stage 2 presentation



## Overview & Priorities – Kerry County Council

**County Profile**

- Peripheral, Peninsular, mountainous topography – significant coastline;
- Population 147,707 – 1.5% growth;
- 65%:35% Rural to Urban;
- Rural Depopulation;
- Graduate Retention;
- Age Profile 3% above National Average;
- High Economic Dependency Ratio;
- Strong Agricultural, Retail, Public Sector, Fintech, Agri-tech and Manufacturing employment;
- Highest dependency in State on Tourism – 1:5;
- 90% of People employed in Companies under 10 – 8 Companies employ over 250 people;
- No significant impact on County from the City Regions of Limerick & Cork;
- NPF – RSES – Designation of “Kerry Hub & Knowledge Tri-angle” – Economic Engine of the County;
- Third Level Centre;

**Kerry County Council's Key Priorities**

- Improve Access and Connectivity – Limerick & Cork Transport Corridors; Air Access Shannon – Kerry – Cork Ports – Fenit & Foynes SIF; Broadband;
- Development of Economic Infrastructure – Targeted Growth Sectors – Tourism – Agri-tech and Fin-tech; Centres of Excellence – National & International Scale – Agri-tech & RDI Hub; FDI Target;
- Targeting Tourism Growth – Infrastructure and Seasonality in a partnership model;
- Regeneration of Tralee & Killarney;
- Targeted Rural Regeneration;
- Delivery of the Housing Programme across the County;
- Foster Stronger Communities – LCDC, LEADER, AGE, Accessible, MD Funding;
- Financial Stability of the Local Authority and Financial Planning with Good-Governance;
- Building Sustainable Strategic Partnerships;
- Strong Citizen & Customer Focus;
- Strong Democratic Leadership – MD Structure;
- Emergency Planning;
- Organisational Focus & Capacity;

**ED Population Change 1996-2016**

- < -30 %
- -30 to -15 %
- -15 to -5 %
- -5 to -1 %
- -1 to 1 %
- 1 to 5 %
- 5 to 10 %
- 10 to 20 %
- > 20 %

**Example of priorities**

## Regeneration of Iveragh Peninsula

**Overview**

- Area with significant rural decline;
- Ring of Kerry – Tourism Driver;
- Farming – low-income;
- Aged Population – High Dependency Ratio;

**Targeted Policy**

- Skellig Crí – UCC Satellite University;
- Pilot Visitor Development Plan;
- Úibh Ráthaigh Task Force
- International Gold Tier Dark Skies Reserve;
- Access – €28m Road Investment;
- Water & Wastewater;
- Broadband;
- Marine infrastructure supporting Fishing & Tourism – Cromane, Renard, Valentia, Cahersiveen;
- South Kerry Greenway;
- UNESCO Designation;
- Global Centre of Excellence – RDI;
- Sneem Digital Hub;

**1. Killorglin**

- Rural Town;
- Work to Living population of 2:1;
- Multinational and indigenous base for Medtech and Financial Services;
- RDI hub – world class centre of excellence, partnership with KCC, Fexco and I.T. Tralee;
- 300 high-tech jobs and start-ups over 5 year period;

**Example of priorities**

**2. Cahersiveen**

Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation, Skellig Crí, UCC Satellite University, based in Cahersiveen library.

**3. Valentia**

- Valentia Trans-Atlantic Cable Station;
- UNESCO World Heritage Application;

**4. Sneem**

- Sneem Digital Hub;

## Approach to Revitalising Tralee

**Infrastructure**

- €40m extensive regeneration programme;
- Linking of Tralee to Limerick via Foynes plan under development;
- Development of Northern Bypass and Economic Corridor to Fenit;
- Greenway Tralee to Fenit linking to Listowel and onto Limerick;

**University & Technology Campus**

- Munster Technical University Designation;
- Kerry Technology Park identified as a unique and key economic driver for the County;
- Incubation building – Tom Crean Centre;
- Companies in park employing in excess of 300 people;
- STEM Building;
- IDA Advanced Technology Building actively marketed by IDA in conjunction with KCC;
- Agritech Centre of Excellence – partnership with Kerry County Council, Dairymaster, Institute of Technology Tralee;
- UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Fitness and Recreation – Kerry Sports Academy;

**Example of priorities**

**Town Centre**

- Kerry County Council Regeneration of Town Centre;
- Island of Geese – European Regional Development Fund Urban Centre Grant Scheme;
- Smarter travel programme;
- Town centre health check;
- Developing partnership with Heritage Council on reuse of Buildings;
- Development Contributions Scheme Revision;
- Support Business Incentive Scheme targeting underperforming streets;
- Reuse of Vacant Buildings;
- Supporting Chamber Alliances

**Economic Initiatives**

- Kerry Scitech Industry led Cluster in association with Kerry County Council and Institute of Technology Tralee;
- Working with agencies and local business interests to develop Tralee 2040 plan over 2019;
- Pilot skills audit being conducted in Tralee in December 2018;
- Hosting Economic conference in 2019;
- Prosper Kerry Series – Diaspora initiative in association with the Guinness Enterprise Centre, Institute of Technology Tralee, Enterprise Ireland and Kerry County Council;



# NOAC Reports & Performance Indicators

## Kerry Co. Co. Approach to Use of NOAC Reports and Performance Indicators

### Corporate Governance and Review

1

## Corporate Approach to Performance Management and Measurement

### Main Elements :

- ▶ KCC Corporate Plan - Strategic Priorities
- ▶ Annual Budget and Directorate Priorities
- ▶ Service Delivery Plan
- ▶ Performance Management and Measurement Framework
- ▶ Annual Targets and Monitoring Systems
- ▶ Regular Review of Outcomes at Senior Level
- ▶ Corrective Actions/Business Process Analysis/Continual Improvements
- ▶ Oversight of Elected Council and Audit Committee
- ▶ Organisation Efficiency and Performance Committee
- ▶ Cross-Sectional Performance Working Group
- ▶ Internal Audit

2

## Our Approach

- ▶ Following publication of the 2014 NOAC Report and specific NOAC Indicator Recommendations Additional Measures put in place by KCC :
  - ▶ Assignment of Officer to lead out on Performance Measurement, Management and Improvement across the organisation
  - ▶ Local Governance Structures strengthened supporting this approach
  - ▶ **Performance Measurement Framework** devised which sets out the Corporate Policy in relation to Performance Measurement and Review across the Organisation - (See No 6)
  - ▶ Framework Developed with Organisation Efficiency and Performance Committee (Cross-Sectional Senior Staff)
  - ▶ Framework Adopted by Senior Management Team - March 2017, presented to Audit Committee
  - ▶ Framework rolled out across the organisation, training provided to Business Heads
  - ▶ Framework sets out the Performance Measurement Cycle :
    - ▶ Corporate/Business Planning
    - ▶ Target Setting
    - ▶ Quarterly and Annual Collection of Outcomes
    - ▶ Analysis and review of Performance V Targets
    - ▶ Management Review and Evaluation to effect improvement
    - ▶ Review in place for National and Local Indicators

3

## Use of the Indicators

*Overall Objective is to utilise Performance Indicators as a Management Tool for Performance Analysis, Review and Improvement of Services*

- ▶ Targets established from 2017 for National Indicators in conjunction with Senior Section Management and approved by SMT
- ▶ Quarterly Review of Outcomes V Target at Section Management and SMT Level
- ▶ Large Range of Local Indicators of performance developed and Targets set from 2017 - approved by SMT
- ▶ Quarterly Review of Local Outcomes with Targets at Section Management and SMT Level
- ▶ Reviews include year-on-year performance, with Local Government Median Values and comparative Local Authorities
- ▶ *Overall Objective : To ensure Performance Indicator review process is firmly embedded in our Governance Processes*

4

## Use of NOAC Performance Reports

- ▶ 2016 and 2017 NOAC Performance Report - Review and Analysis of Findings at a Senior Level
- ▶ Comparison with 2015, 2016, 2017 Outcomes and LG Median Values
- ▶ Comparisons with 2017 Targets
- ▶ Benchmarking - Comparative Report with Similar Type Local Authorities
- ▶ Comparative Report on Performance to Elected Council and Audit Committee -
- ▶ Key part of Corporate Governance
- ▶ Active use of Performance Information for continuous improvement of services

5

## Review and Analysis :

- ▶ Performance Information on Local and National Performance Indicators outcomes are reviewed and Reported on Regularly
- ▶ Reviewed by Senior Business Unit Managers and also at SMT Level
- ▶ Reasons for Variances analysed
- ▶ Examples of Quarterly Analysis for Local and National Indicators
- ▶ Focus on Key Indicator Areas as part of Performance Reviews and Comparative Analyses
- ▶ Examples of Review

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## Corporate Governance and Review Mechanisms

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### Corporate Review :

- ▶ Organisation Wide Efficiency and Performance Committee - Cross Sectional Representation at Senior Business Manager Level
- ▶ Chaired by Chief Executive, meets Quarterly
- ▶ Recommendations Considered at SMT
- ▶ Sub- Group of Committee - Performance Working Group - Cross Sectional Senior Staff
- ▶ Peer Review of Performance Indicator Outcomes
- ▶ Meet Section Management regularly
- ▶ Aim for Continual Improvements in Performance and Performance Review
- ▶ Year on Year performance review, quarterly review, comparative with Other LAs and with LG Median Values

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# Annual Performance Indicators

Compilation and Verification Process

## Data Compilation and Verification Process

- ▶ NOAC Guidelines issued to Senior Managers responsible for collection and verification of the data
- ▶ Changes to Indicators/Methodology from previous year highlighted
- ▶ KCC fed into NOAC Indicator Review process (early 2017)
- ▶ User Groups set up on LG returns system
- ▶ Organisation Administrator - Kathleen Moriarty
- ▶ Return Administrator - Kathleen Moriarty, Martin O'Donoghue
- ▶ Topic Enterers, Approvers, Co-ordinator allocated
- ▶ Assigned Responsibilities
- ▶ Section approval of Indicator Data is at AO/SEO/SE Level

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## Data Compilation and Verification Process

- ▶ Emphasis to Section Heads of compliance with Guidance in compilation of the Returns (representation on Efficiency Committee)
- ▶ Responsible Departments maintain back-up documentation to show how data is gathered, calculations and how final results arrived at
- ▶ Emphasise Cross-checking of returns with other returns to D/HPLG or other Agencies
- ▶ Review of Data collected by other Agencies - verification by Section Management
- ▶ High level Review of return with previous year and reasons for difference
- ▶ Approval of returned data at a senior level within the Section - AO, SEO, SE

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## Data Compilation and Verification Process

- ▶ Director of Service approves relevant return for their areas - prior to submission to NOAC
- ▶ Internal Controls
- ▶ Internal Audit Quality Assurance Check for a Number of Indicators prior to submission of 2017 PI return - new Assurance Check introduced in 2018
- ▶ Head of Implementation - final sign-off on data
- ▶ Senior Management Team Review the Draft Return prior to final sign-off - this includes comparison with previous year performance and 2017 Target
- ▶ Returns submitted within Deadline to NOAC - 26th April 2018
- ▶ Audit of PIs part of Internal Audit Plan for 2018 - 25 days assigned (See No 18)
- ▶ Findings and follow up of Internal Audit Report on the Indicators reviewed by SMT and Audit Committee

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