



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)

Minutes of the Meeting – Tuesday 25 May 2021 at 10am

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Meeting Platform

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members:	Martina Moloney	Brian Cawley
	Niall Quinn	Mary Hurley
	Declan Breathnach	Noel Harrington
Secretariat:	Neill Dalton	John Goldrick
	Darren Browne	
Apologies:	Constance Hanniffy	Margaret Lane
	Claire Gavin	Colin Flood

1. Minutes & actions of previous meeting;

The minutes of the NOAC meeting of 27 April 2021 were approved subject to an agreed amendment.

2. Welcome to the new members and tour de table;

The Chairperson welcomed the newest Members, Declan Breathnach and Noel Harrington, to the NOAC board. The Board and Secretariat introduced themselves and provided their background.

The Board wished to acknowledge the passing of Secretariat member Claire Gavin's father, Ger Gavin, and wished to send their sympathies to the family.

3. Declaration of conflict of interest;

No conflicts of interest were raised.

4. Matters Arising;

There were no matters arising.

5. Work Programme;

a) Chair;

Scrutiny Report Update:

Since 2017 NOAC has been reviewing the performance of individual local authorities. This has involved site meetings by the Chairperson and Secretariat and a follow up meeting between the local authorities and the NOAC Board. Last week the first 14 Scrutiny reports were published on the NOAC website. These consist of 1 overview report and 13 reports of individual local authorities. All these can be viewed by following the current 'Latest News' tab on the website 'Homepage'. In advance of their release, the reports were circulated to the respective local authority Chief Executives. 2 further reports will be published by the end of June for Sligo and Limerick City and County Council with additional reports to follow. In conjunction with the Department's communications team, the Chair has recorded a video covering the publication of these reports. This will be made available on the website in due course.

b) WG1 – Local Government Governance, Efficiency & Reform (LGGER);

For the benefit of the new members, the WG Chair provided a brief overview of the work of WG1. There has been no WG1 meeting since the last NOAC meeting. However, work has progressed in the review of Corporate Plans 2019-2024 with a tender document now issued. A review of Local Enterprise Office (LEO) service level agreements is ongoing by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and is due to be released by the end of quarter two. In the autumn, the WG will look to progress work in engaging with elected members as part of NOAC's remit.

c) WG2 – Performance Indicators;

There has been no WG2 meeting since the last NOAC meeting. The Secretariat are progressing with organising validation meetings with individual local authorities reviewing the 2020 data returns. These are expected to begin in the next couple of weeks. The Secretariat have requested the CCMA and LGMA to prepare proposals in relation to climate action. These indicators are expected to be ready for the 2021 report process. At the next WG2 meeting, the WG will review the current make-up of indicators and decide those to proceed with in future reports.

d) WG3 – Communications and Customer Service;

As part of developing a NOAC communications strategy, progress is ongoing with a mapping process to determine NOACs standing with key stakeholders. This audit will be undertaken by an external company and is currently out for tender with a deadline of 16 June. One of the outputs of this tender is to host a workshop in July bringing together the Board and Secretariat to prioritise stakeholders. The Secretariat have been in contact with the LGMA to advance arrangements for a Good Practice Seminar for 4/5 October 2021. With regards the NOAC website, the Secretariat are continuing with updates and improvements.

e) WG4 – Financial Management and Performance;

As the WG4 Chair was unable to attend the meeting, an update was deferred till the next NOAC meeting.

6. Moorhead Review;

Mary Hurley, Assistant Secretary for the Local Government Division, provided a brief update on the Moorhead review report. The report has been considered by Government last week as part of its Programme for Government and has agreed a range of measures to improve how councils operate. This includes an action plan and a review programme around how councillors attend and participate in meetings. Mary Hurley will provide a list of 'Frequently Asked Questions' that will be circulated amongst the Board. Engagement has been held by government with the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) and the Local Authorities Members Association (LAMA). Issues raised included hours of working, travel and subsistence, attendance at meetings and the type of work done at local level. It is expected the measures will be signed by Ministers into regulation once finalised from the 1 July. It was agreed to defer further discussion of the report till the next NOAC meeting.

NOAC engagement with elected members is part of WG1's agenda. Work is yet to progress but the WG will revert to the Board in due course.

7. Members departures;

The Board and Secretariat wished to express their thanks and appreciation to departing Board Members, Martina Moloney and Constance Hanniffy. They expressed their huge admiration for their vast knowledge and expertise of the local government sector and their rigour in dealing with various streams of complex information. The Board and Secretariat also acknowledged the huge support and wise deliberations they provided at meetings which has provided a solid base on which to progress the work of NOAC. They wished

Martina and Constance the very best in the future and aim to meet again in person once circumstances allow it.

Martina Moloney wished to express her own thanks and appreciation to the NOAC Board and Secretariat. Martina wished to acknowledge the good work NOAC has done to establish a sense of collaboration and partnerships with the Local Authorities in reviewing their performance. Martina also expressed her admiration at the level of commitment to the work of NOAC by past and present Board Members and Secretariat staff. Martina also wished to acknowledge the improvements made in the presentation of the work of NOAC in its reports and its presentation via the NOAC website. Martina wished NOAC every success in its future endeavours.

8. Future Meetings;

The next NOAC meeting is currently scheduled for 10am, 6 July 2021.

9. Any Other Business:

Audit Scotland report:

It was agreed this item would be deferred until a new Secretariat Principal Officer is appointed.

Board and Secretariat appointments:

The Secretariat are expecting to have a new Principal Officer appointed by the end of June. A submission is with the Minister for the appointment of 2 new Board Members with a decision expected in the next few weeks.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Action	Decision
1.	Minutes & actions of previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed subject to agreed amendments
5 (a).	Scrutiny Report Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 further reports to be published by the end of June for Sligo and Limerick City and County Council • A video covering the publication of these reports will be made available on the website.
5 (b).	WG1 – Local Government Governance, Efficiency & Reform (LGGER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the autumn, the WG will look to progress work in engaging with elected members as part of NOAC’s remit.
5 (c).	WG2 – Performance Indicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation meetings are expected to begin in the next couple of weeks. • At the next WG2 meeting, the WG will review the current make-up of indicators and decide those to proceed with in future reports.
5 (d).	WG3 - Communications and Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy tender - One of the outputs of this tender is to host a workshop in July bringing together the Board and Secretariat to prioritise stakeholders. • NOAC website - the Secretariat are continuing with updates and improvements.

5 (e).	WG4 – Financial Management and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update was deferred till the next NOAC meeting.
6.	Moorhead Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mary Hurley will provide a list of 'Frequently Asked Questions' that will be circulated amongst the Board. It was agreed to defer further discussion of the report till the next NOAC meeting.
7.	Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled for 10am, 6 July 2021.
8.	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Scotland report - It was agreed this item would be deferred until a new Secretariat Principal Officer is appointed.