



Public Spending Code Report 2020

NOAC Report No. 45 – November 2021

NOAC (the National Oversight and Audit Commission) was established in July 2014 under the 2014 Local Government Reform Act to provide independent oversight of the local government sector. The statutory functions assigned to NOAC include the scrutiny of the Operation of Audit Committees in Local Government.

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Circulated with this report were three documents:

Appendix 4: Compilation of Detailed Inventories
Appendix 5: Compilation of In-Depth Check Summaries
Appendix 6: Compilation of Checklists

Introduction

The Public Spending Code¹ (PSC) was developed by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). The Code applies to both current and capital expenditure and to all public bodies in receipt of public funds. According to DPER, the Code brings together, in one place, details of the obligations of those responsible for spending public money. Local authorities completed their reports in accordance with the guidance issued by the County and City Management Association Finance Committee, in agreement with the DPER.² The guidance was updated for 2020 to include:

- Updated introduction paragraphs to reference the revised Project Lifecycle set out in the revised PSC;
- Replacement of Capital Checklists No 2 and 6 to align with the DPER; and
- Replacement of Project Inventory to align with the DPER.

As local authority funding derives from a number of sources, including grants from several Government Departments, it was decided that the Chief Executives of individual local authorities should be responsible for carrying out the quality assurance requirements in Part A04 of the Code and that their reports should be submitted to NOAC for incorporation in a composite report for the local government sector.

This is the seventh Public Spending Code report compiled and published by NOAC for the local government sector. The original letter issued on 11 March 2021 to local authority Chief Executives (Appendix 1) requested them to submit their 2020 QA reports by 28 May 2021. Of the 31 local authorities, 24 submitted their reports by the NOAC deadline. Clare, Cork City, Galway County and South Dublin councils submitted its reports by 31 May 2021. Kilkenny County Council and Louth Council submitted its returns on 18 June 2021 while Cork County Council submitted its return on 29 June 2021.

The Quality Assurance reporting requirement consists of the following five steps:

1. Local authorities should draw up an inventory of projects/programmes at the different stages of the Project Life Cycle, in respect of all capital and current expenditure projects to a value greater than €0.5m. (Routine administrative budgets already in place are not included in the inventory as only new or extended current expenditure to the value of €0.5m or greater is subject to the application of the Code.) under the headings of:
 - a) Expenditure being considered.
 - b) Expenditure being incurred.
 - c) Projects/Programmes Completed or discontinued in the reference year.
2. Confirm publication on the local authority's website of summary information on all procurements in excess of €10m related to projects in progress or completed in the year under review and provide a link to the relevant website location. (A new project may

¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/public-spending-code/>

² <https://noac.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CCMA-PSC-QA-Guidance-February-2021.pdf>

become a “project in progress” during the year under review if the procurement process is completed and a contract is signed.)

3. Complete the seven specified checklists. Only one of each type of checklist per local authority is required and not one per each project/programme. The completion of the checklists is to be based on an appropriate sample of the projects/areas of expenditure relevant to that checklist.
4. Carry out a more in-depth review of selected projects/programmes such that, over a 3-5 year period, every stage of the project life-cycle and every scale of project will be subject to a closer examination. Revenue projects selected for in-depth review must represent a minimum of 1% of the total value of all revenue projects in the inventory, while the requirement in respect of capital projects is 5% of the total value of all capital projects in the inventory.
5. Complete a short summary report consisting of the inventory, procurement reference and checklists referenced in steps 1 to 3 and the local authority’s judgment as to the adequacy of the appraisal/planning, implementation or review work that it examined as part of step 4, the reasons why it formed that judgment and its proposals to remedy any inadequacies found during the entire quality assurance process.

While the Code requires certification of the reports by Accounting Officers, this formal position does not normally exist in the local government sector so NOAC requested Chief Executives or Deputy/Acting Chief Executives to certify the reports. Chief Executives certified 28 Quality Assurance Reports while three Quality Assurance Reports were certified by Acting/Interim Chief Executives.

The Code requires that the Quality Assurance reports be published on the organisation’s website. All 31 local authorities complied.

Summary

A compliance checklist of each local authorities Public Spending Code Quality Assurance report is included at Appendix 2.

The overall position is as follows:

Step 1: Inventory of projects/programmes at different stages of Project Life Cycle

The requirement to submit an inventory of all projects/programmes costing greater than €0.5m distinguishing between capital and current expenditure and categorised by expenditure being considered, expenditure being incurred and projects/programmes completed or discontinued in the reference year, was met without exception.

The summary inventory of all 31 local authorities is at Appendix 3.

The combined inventories in full can be found at Appendix 4.

Of the 31 authorities, Cork City, Galway City and Westmeath County Council were the only local authorities which had a current expenditure programme completed or discontinued in 2020. The following 13 authorities did not have a current expenditure project or programme in their 'under consideration' category:

Local Authority
Dublin City Council
Fingal County Council
Galway County Council
Kildare County Council
Kilkenny County Council
Leitrim County Council
Louth County Council
Monaghan County Council
Offaly County Council
Sligo County Council
Westmeath County Council
Wexford County Council
Wicklow County Council

The Code requires the inventory to break down capital expenditure being considered, incurred and completed or discontinued between capital projects and capital grant schemes. The treatment of Capital Grant Schemes within the Project Inventory can therefore be clarified as follows:

1. Where a Capital Grant Scheme is 100% funded by Government Grant – Project Cost to be included under Capital Programme.
2. Where a Capital Grant Scheme is 100% funded by the Local Authority – Project Cost to be included under Capital Grant Scheme.
3. Where a Capital Grant Scheme is primarily funded by Government Grant with an element of local funding – Project Cost to be included under Capital Programme with a note made for each element funded by own resources e.g. Includes 20% local funding.
4. Where a Capital Grant Scheme is primarily funded by Local Funding with an element of government grant funding – Project Cost is to be recorded under Capital Grant Scheme with

a note made for each element funded by government grant, e.g. Includes 40% government grant funding.

5. The explanatory column can be used to confirm where projects are joint funded by the Exchequer and from the local authorities own resources. It should be used in all instances where it applies.

The only local authorities to insert any capital grant scheme data into their inventories included the following:

Local Authority
Carlow County Council
Clare County Council
Galway City Council
Galway County Council
Kilkenny County Council
Laois County Council
Leitrim County Council
Limerick City and County Council
Longford County Council
Louth County Council
Monaghan County Council
Offaly County Council
South Dublin County Council
Wicklow County Council

Step 2: Publish Summary Information on Procurements in Excess of €10m

The Code requires public bodies to publish summary information on their websites of all procurements in excess of €10m. Local authorities are required to furnish NOAC with a link to where this summary information on procurement is available on their respective websites. Of the 31 local authorities, 7 did not provide a link to where details of procurements in excess of €10 million as there was no procurement in excess of this amount.

The remaining 24 local authorities provided links to where this summary information on procurement in excess of €10m is available:

Carlow	http://www.carlow.ie/wp-content/documents/uploads/Housing%20Capital%20Projects%20in%20Excess%20of%20€10%20million%20for%20the%20Year%202020.pdf
Cavan	http://www.cavancoco.ie/procurement-over-10-million.htm
Clare	https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/business/procurement
Cork City	https://www.corkcity.ie/en/council-services/public-info/spending-and-revenue/
Cork County	https://www.corkcoco.ie/your-county-council/accessibility-maps-publications
Donegal	https://www.donegalcoco.ie/services/procurement/
Dublin City	http://www.dublincity.ie/PublicSpendingCode
Fingal	https://www.fingal.ie/council/service/public-spending-code

Galway Co	http://www.galway.ie/en/services/yourcouncil/finance/publicspendingcode/
Kerry	https://www.kerrycoco.ie/finance/financial-documents/
Kildare	https://kildare.ie/countycouncil/YourCouncil/GovernanceandCompliance/PublicSpendingCode/
Limerick	https://www.limerick.ie/council/services/business-and-economy/procurement/procurements
Longford	http://www.longfordcoco.ie/Services/Finance/Finance-Documents/Compliance/
Mayo	https://www.mayo.ie/finance/public-spending-code-compliance
Meath	https://www.meath.ie/council/your-council/finance-and-procurement/public-spending-code-quality-assurance-reports
Monaghan	https://monaghan.ie/public-spending-code/
Roscommon	http://www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/about_us/business-units/finance/procurement/procurement-over-%E2%82%AC10-million/
Sligo	http://www.sligococo.ie/publicspendingcode/
South Dublin	https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/business/procurement/public-spending-code-2020
Tipperary	http://www.tipperarycoco.ie/finance
Waterford	https://www.waterfordcouncil.ie/media/financial/reports.htm
Westmeath	http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/ourservices/finance/procurement/publicspendingcode/
Wexford	https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/council-and-democracy/procurement-finance-and-credit-control/council-spend
Wicklow	http://www.wicklow.ie/Living/Your-Council/Finance/Procurement/Procurement-Over-10-million

Step 3: Completion of Seven Checklists

The requirement to complete and submit a set of 7 self-assessment checklists was fulfilled by all 31 local authorities. The compilation of checklists is available at Appendix 6.

Step 4: Carry out an in-depth review of selected projects/programmes

All local authorities have carried out the in-depth check of a selection of projects from their inventories and have provided information pertaining to the reviews for the purposes of step 5. The information submitted included reports structured in accordance with the template provided in Appendix D of the 'Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Requirements – A Guidance Note for the Local Government Sector' prepared by DPER with the Finance Committee of the County and City Managers' Association. The proportion of the inventory represented by the expenditure on the projects selected for in-depth review was amended by DPER for 2016 to an average of 5% of the value of capital projects and 1% of the value of revenue projects to be achieved over a three year period. All 31 local authorities carried out in-depth checks.

Step 5: Complete a short summary report consisting of the inventory, procurement references and judgment as to the adequacy of the appraisal/planning, implementation or review work examined by the local authority in step 4

All 31 local authorities complied with Step 5.

Appendix 1 NOAC letter to local authorities re: Public Spending Code 2020



NOAC 03-2021

11 March 2021

Public Spending Code - Quality Assurance Reporting 2020

Dear Chief Executive,

Thank you for submitting the 2019 Quality Assurance reports required under the Public Spending Code to NOAC in accordance with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (D/PER).

The Report was published on 23 December 2020 and is available on the NOAC website at https://noac.ie/noac_publications/report-27-public-spending-code-report-2019/

Accompanying this letter is the updated Guidance Note for the Local Government Sector on the Public Spending Code (PSC) Quality Assurance Requirements from the CCMA.

For ease of reference the updates to the guidance are as follows:

- Introduction paragraphs amended to reference the revised Project Lifecycle set out in the revised PSC
- Replacement of Capital Checklists No 2 and 6 to align with the DPER version.
- Replacement of Project Inventory to align with the DPER version

Also accompanying this letter are the:

- New DPER Checklist
- New DPER Inventory

NOAC requests that you review any issues that require a change of practice or other action as referred to in the in-depth reviews carried out by your authority, or that arose in completing the checklists and make the necessary arrangements for improvements in those areas. If you are one of the minority of authorities, who had not yet published the 2019 QA report on your website, you should now arrange for its publication.

The deadline for submission of the 2020 QA report is Friday 28 May 2021. The inventory is to be completed and returned as EXCEL spreadsheets in the attached format. The checklists should be completed and returned as a WORD document. Please note the following:

- Only the Excel and Word documents provided by DPER should be returned and they should be editable with whole unrounded figures recorded i.e. €1,000,058.00 not “€1m”.

- Cells and headings should not be amended or moved.
- Additional cells or headings should not be inserted into the documents. Any additional information should be provided by way of a detailed note.
- If there is no information to provide for a particular question this should be left blank or marked as n/a where indicated.

Submissions that do not follow the above will be returned.

Please ensure that the required documents are submitted by email to info@noac.ie by the deadline of Friday 28 May 2021.

Thank you again for your co-operation in this matter.

NOAC Secretariat

Cc: Local Authority Public Spending Code QA staff from 2019 report.

Appendix 2 Compliance Checklist

NOAC Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Reports for Local Authorities - Compliance Checklist

Local Authority	Step 1: Project Inventories	Step 2: Online Publication of Summary Information of all Procurements in Excess of €10m	Step 3: 7 Checklists Completed	Step 4: In-Depth Check on selected projects/programmes	Step 5: Summary Report
Carlow	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cavan	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clare	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cork City	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cork County	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Donegal	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dublin City	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fingal	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Galway City	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Galway Co	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kerry	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kildare	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kilkenny	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Laois	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leitrim	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Limerick City and County	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Longford	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Louth	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mayo	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meath	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monaghan	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Offaly	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Roscommon	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sligo	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Dublin	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tipperary	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Waterford City and County	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Westmeath	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wexford	Yes	No Procurement fell within the category in 2020	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wicklow	Yes	Yes - Link Provided	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appendix 3 Summary of 2020 Detailed Inventories

Summary of 2020 Detailed Inventories

Local Authority	Expenditure being Considered - Greater than €0.5m (Capital and Current)				Expenditure being Incurred - Greater than €0.5m (Capital and Current)					Projects/Programmes Completed or discontinued in the reference year - Greater than €0.5m (Capital and Current)			
	Current Expenditure Amount in Reference Year	Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Non Grant)	Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Grant)	Projected Lifetime Expenditure	Current Expenditure Amount in Reference Year	Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Non Grant)	Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Grant)	Cumulative Expenditure to-date	Projected Lifetime Expenditure (Capital Only)	Current Expenditure Amount in Reference Year	Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Non Grant)	Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Grant)	Final Outturn Expenditure
Carlow County Council	7,536,300	31,020,000	92,988,896	124,008,896	65,813,351	1,054,768	10,651,721	16,288,364	27,469,326	-	-	2,559,048	15,197,338
Cavan County Council	3,858,062	-	-	130,256,947	80,475,450	11,446,710	-	86,632,273	582,415,541	-	887,770	-	7,252,265
Clare County Council	3,253,732	-	-	63,044,596	122,962,761	4,252,082	30,047,291	70,530,980	478,859,375	-	99,537	8,461,615	25,566,854
Cork City Council	5,472,748	2,065,861	-	291,314,658	216,370,100	68,969,568	-	206,656,946	368,934,171	47,675	25,540,121	-	168,849,902
Cork County Council	13,088,812	-	-	244,241,459	329,986,478	152,528,999	-	376,018,036	-	-	63,954,050	-	-
Donegal County Council	549,507	2,000,000	-	264,937,052	204,603,984	63,623,848	-	271,722,257	1,256,601,187	-	-	-	9,992,559
Dublin City Council	-	-	-	178,791,757	1,279,879,000	165,780,049	-	404,001,352	2,566,861,973	-	12,089,122	-	112,821,251
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	16,804,800	3,943,209	-	552,996,665	269,596,401	27,410,141	-	49,499,740	101,549,918	-	39,823,778	-	59,254,922
Fingal County Council	-	-	-	197,243,706	394,001,974	127,058,555	-	678,850,262	-	-	603,038	-	9,908,177
Galway City Council	14,704,243	3,450,589	10,800,000	76,104,243	88,994,896	60,624,992	11,541,816	258,806,151	-	42,988,355	2,153,400	3,734,217	49,092,572
Galway County Council	-	-	276,088	81,141,939	167,201,114	3,224,218	74,046,545	184,536,881	1,154,663,859	-	-	3,191,600	20,494,484
Kerry County Council	8,038,271	-	-	521,549,832	207,329,711	51,252,155	-	212,327,472	707,900,930	-	2,497,502	-	14,564,349
Kildare County Council	-	304,696,189	-	304,696,189	225,344,159	359,376,820	-	202,202,144	-	-	28,232,705	-	28,232,705
Kilkenny County Council	-	12,469	194,049	105,057,612	111,783,408	4,314,832	21,024,206	54,458,418	141,084,763	-	228,063	2,811,457	7,997,462
Laois County Council	3,986,735	2,688,033	-	141,331,591	84,916,486	18,381,297	3,268,293	129,571,778	85,692,591	-	2,025,208	-	12,611,453
Leitrim County Council	-	-	-	87,647,940	48,108,030	-	10,530,417	-	173,208,328	-	-	607,061	607,061

Limerick City and County Council	28,443,426	13,119,357	92,021,416	358,568,376	853,502,182	10,039,687	89,029,174	1,114,820,015	302,378,469	-	-	6,200,005	9,440,036
Longford County Council	3,230,747	-	-	20,229,381	59,820,761	-	9,910,816	19,700,980	45,351,290	-	1,035,736	1,239,426	9,857,915
Louth County Council	-	-	68,062,008	547,139,686	148,859,578	-	70,187,076	6,067,733,954	-	-	-	2,125,068	22,421,972
Mayo County Council	9,649,012	3,514,739	-	380,706,701	193,432,941	49,969,449	-	159,532,363	417,418,004	-	364,360	-	17,386,517
Meath County Council	14,339,394	1,658,325	-	418,488,672	177,878,615	46,598,010	-	66,071,076	138,934,834	-	28,448,448	-	44,534,117
Monaghan County Council	-	18,327	560,000	212,095,413	81,670,328	1,135,459	12,317,934	39,127,662	132,433,132	-	620,751	12,170,810	21,862,702
Offaly County Council	-	99,537	2,537,446	67,868,285	85,262,452	339,987	3,328,632	10,531,215	32,864,609	-	1,108	3,232,355	22,788,895
Roscommon County Council	1,209,303	350,000	-	27,902,591	66,592,190	25,391,490	-	53,977,500	376,238,464	-	727,873	-	1,738,196
Sligo County Council	-	-	-	71,904,054	76,093,615	72,803,580	-	228,251,226	952,505,195	-	-	-	1,904,635
South Dublin County Council	11,311,000	548,437	-	164,840,800	344,868,057	77,044,960	744,363	150,134,423	428,021,638	-	-	588,825	13,434,000
Tipperary County Council	9,757,389	1,623,396	-	190,924,464	220,928,792	31,998,283	-	51,922,615	169,696,538	-	1,436,476	-	36,899,498
Waterford City and County Council	3,208,693	860,249	-	53,134,292	173,714,031	16,923,166	-	52,343,141	140,211,233	-	14,556,992	-	51,054,737
Westmeath County Council	-	251,211	-	271,134,000	80,256,891	23,557,454	-	130,772,242	175,058,896	11,483,918	2,851,343	-	15,259,834
Wexford County Council	-	3,043,271	-	267,237,805	170,345,887	32,728,197	-	76,233,875	263,331,035	-	5,124,449	-	19,880,173
Wicklow County Council	-	5,194,250	-	375,804,839	120,489,775	53,494,288	5,981,382	609,136,814	645,558,738	-	19,337,124	-	110,629,142



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
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