



NOAC GOOD PRACTICE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SEMINAR SHOWCASES LOCAL AUTHORITY INNOVATION

Local authorities are continually seeking to innovate in their service delivery and citizen engagement, Peter Burke, Minister of State for Local Government and Planning said today, addressing a seminar hosted by the National Oversight and Audit Commission, which was held both in-person and virtually.

NOAC's *Good Practice in Local Government* seminar, an annual event organised by NOAC, in collaboration with the Local Government Management Agency, showcased a range of local authority innovations across areas such as climate action, public consultation and citizen interaction.

Addressing the seminar today, Minister Burke commended the work of local authorities, saying that NOAC's role in highlighting Good Practice in local government had never been more relevant. Local authorities had a lot of practical experience in demonstrating excellence and that it was appropriate, and indeed vital, that they shared that knowledge with each other. The Minister further stated that we could be thankful to our local authorities for stepping up to the challenge during the Covid pandemic and recognise how they played an enormous part in rolling out a range of Government initiatives.

Also speaking at the seminar, Brendan McGrath, Chair of the County and City Management Association, said:

“Local authorities have shown huge innovation over the Covid period, but equally we continually seek to adapt, innovate and provide best class services. Whether implementing technical solutions or improving internal business processes, our focus is always on improving efficiency and delivering quality public services to citizens. The projects on display today are just a sample of the innovations happening throughout the country, and we hope they will serve to inspire and further develop innovation within the local government sector.”

Michael McCarthy, Chair of NOAC, said that he was delighted that this year the seminar was taking place as part of DPER's Innovation Week 2021. He added that the week “gives an opportunity to drive the innovation agenda and to deliver better and more efficient services to the public. Those are sentiments which resonate with NOAC and the wider local government sector as well.” The NOAC Chair also stated that “one of the important roles of NOAC is supporting the development and enhancement of good practice by local government bodies. The projects being showcased today demonstrate this.”

The Good Practice projects and innovations discussed at today's seminar included:

A Weather Impact Register App (WIRE) developed by the local authority Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs)

This app provides a GIS based tool through which local authorities can record and review the impacts of weather events and climate trends in their areas in order to inform climate adaptation planning into the future.

A collaborative approach taken by Galway City Council to develop a number of connected and interlinked urban regeneration and development projects.

Through dialogue with partners, these projects were developed and refined to form a cohesive proposal for investment in compact growth in the city that will unlock and support €4 billion of public and private investment and fast-track the integrated sustainable growth of the City core.

A Meath County Council initiative to localise the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

As part of an URBACT project, funded by the EU, the Council nominated Trim to work with 18 other locations across Europe to feed local information and ideas into a pilot project. The ultimate goal is to achieve an integrated action plan that could be replicated across other towns or scaled up to county level.

A Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown County Council virtual consultation on its Draft Development Plan

A virtual room was set up to facilitate online consultation and facilitate online access to the DLR Draft County Development Plan 2022-2028. The initiative provided an opportunity for individuals and groups who could not view the plan in person due to Covid restrictions to view the plan in a similar layout to what would have been provided in a physical display.

The provision of remote working hubs to create sustainable and vibrant rural communities in Longford

Longford County Council has adopted a cross-departmental approach to the development of rural working hubs, identifying the regeneration department as the primary contact in the development of hubs with the IT section playing a key collaboration role, also through its implementation of the County Digital Strategy.

Streetscape development in Cork City Council to meet the needs of businesses and communities during Covid

Cork City Council made permanent changes to the city centre and suburbs during Covid, using extensive partnership structures including transport, Gardai, elected

members and business representative organisations. Changes were based on agreed principles and as a result 17 streets have been permanently pedestrianised and 4.7km of cycle routes have been installed.

A Chatbot to provide information to citizens and businesses about Fingal County Council's response to Covid

Fingal County Council implemented a chatbot on the Council's website in 2020 to provide information to citizens and businesses about the Council's response to Covid. During a time when offices were closed to the public, the chatbot offered another information channel for the public in addition to phone, website and social media, with the added benefit of being available at a time and place of the citizen's choosing.

Ends.