



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)

Minutes of the Meeting – Tuesday 7 December 2021 at 11.10am

Venue: Remote Meeting via WebEx Meeting Platform

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members: Niall Quinn Ciarán Hayes

Brian Cawley

Secretariat: Claire Gavin John Goldrick

Darren Browne

Apologies: Mary Hurley Margaret Lane

Noel Harrington Philomena Poole

Declan Breathnach (attended meeting with SDCC but was unable to remain for the main meeting)

1. Minutes & actions of previous meeting;

The minutes of the NOAC main meeting from 2 November 2021 were approved and they will be published on the website.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest;

No conflicts of interest were raised.

3. Matters Arising;

There were no matters arising.

4. Work Programme:

a) Chair;

Following the earlier meeting with representatives of South Dublin County Council, the Secretariat invited the members to consider and forward any comments they would like to add to the scrutiny report for SDCC. The Board wished to note the initiatives and creativity displayed by South Dublin County Council. The minutes of the Stage 2 meeting are scheduled to be agreed at the next NOAC meeting in January 2022. The scrutiny report of the meetings with Meath County Council is currently being desktop published and will be published before the end of the year. Despite the difficulties posed by Covid-19 and staff turnover within local authorities, scrutiny meetings have been progressed albeit with some delays. A programme of meetings for 2022 has been agreed with the NOAC Chair.

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

Local Authority and Regional Assembly Corporate Plans 2019-2024

The review of Local Authority and Regional Assembly Corporate Plans 2019-2024 has been published. The WG Chair expressed his appreciation to all those involved in its publication.

Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly monitoring report

In October, NOAC received from the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly a monitoring report on the implementation of their regional, spatial and economic strategy. The other regional assemblies are expected to publish their reports in 2022. NOAC may make recommendations to the Minister regarding improvements that could be made in the implementation of these strategies. It was agreed by the WG that clarification will be sought from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage as to the intention behind the role NOAC is required to play especially given the technical nature of the reports. The NOAC Chair and WG1 Chair agreed to discuss the matter further.

Engagement with local enterprise offices

The WG will engage with the local enterprise offices by mean of short questionnaire that is being developed to gather information on their activities and their integration with local authorities.

Engagement with elected members of local authorities

In 2022, the WG will engage with the elected members of the local authorities. Agendas are currently in development.

c) WG2 – Performance Indicators;

The WG last met on the 17 November. A discussion was held on the approach to the media following the press coverage of the 2020 Performance Indicator report in September and what amendments that may be made for the release of the 2021 report. The guidelines for the 2021 Performance Indicator report are currently being drafted and will be reviewed by the WG before being brought to the full NOAC Board in January 2022. The WG Chair will make contact with the previous WG Chair to consider the proposed framework. The next WG2 meeting is scheduled for 15 December.

d) WG3 – Communications and Customer Service;

Good Practice event 2021:

The Good Practice Event 2021 took place in Kilkenny Castle on 9 November 2021 and had both in person and online via the live stream attendance.. The WG Chair acknowledged the effort of all those involved in organising the event in challenging times during Covid-19.

Stakeholder mapping exercise:

The Stakeholder mapping exercise took place on the 14 October. An infographic is currently being developed. The Secretariat have received a draft version and will discuss this with the WG Chair following this meeting.

Local Authority Satisfaction Survey:

The Local Authority Management Agency (LGMA) have taken over responsibility for the next Local Authority Satisfaction Survey. For comparative purposes, the WG wrote to the LGMA to get clarifications on the survey that they are carrying out

Local Authority ICT strategy:

The WG have written to the LGMA to seek clarifications on the strategy.

e) WG4 – Financial Management and Performance;

My Pay report:

Update was provided on a meeting with representatives of the My Pay service. Clarifications were provided on the Dublin City Council and Cork County Council joining the scheme and the challenges posed by the . the single pension scheme.

Engagement with the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) and Audit Committees:

Meeting was advised that the Secretariat are following up with the LGAS on reports to determine the areas that the WG will consider for their work plan in 2022 to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and that the reports can add value.

5. Corporate Governance – Self Assessment Questionnaire

Board Self-Assessment Evaluation Questionnaire:

The Secretariat have collated the 5 completed questionnaires and it was agreed that the outstanding ones should now be submitted to the Secretariat as soon as possible. All responses have been anonymised and once all questionnaires have been returned further discussion will take place where Board Members will then have the option to re-submit comments thereafter. While the Board found it to be a useful exercise, the Board commented on the relevance of some questions to this Board given the generic nature of the State Boards survey. The Board agreed to return to the topic at the next NOAC meeting in January. In the meantime, the NOAC Chair will discuss any issues with the questionnaire the Board may wish to raise.

6. Any Other Business:

Staff vacancy update:

The Secretariat are currently down two senior manager positions with one of these vacancies ongoing since April. Despite the significant work that has been produced this year, the Board commented that a adequately and well-resourced staffed secretariat will work better in terms of oversight, productivity and best practice for local authorities and the work the board undertakes. The Department are aware of the staffing issues the Secretariat currently face. The Chair intends to formally raise these issues again with the Head of the Business Unit and the Department's Assistant Secretary.

Dates of next meeting:

For 2022, the Board agreed the following meeting dates:

- 10am, 11 January 2022;
- 10am, 1 March 2022; and
- 10am, 5 April 2020

These meetings are currently scheduled to take place remotely.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Subject	Action
1.	Minutes & actions of previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed and will be published on website
4a.	Scrutiny Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members are invited to consider and forward any comments they would like to add to the eventual report of the meeting with South Dublin County Council. A program of meetings for 2022 has been agreed with the NOAC Chair. Meath County Council Scrutiny Report to be published in December 2021.
4b.	WG1 – Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly monitoring report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NOAC Chair and WG1 Chair will discuss the matter further.
4c.	WG2 – 2021 Performance Indicators Report;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The guidelines for the 2021 Performance Indicator report will be brought to the full NOAC Board in January 2022.
5.	Corporate Governance – Self-Assessment Evaluation Questionnaire:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaires to be submitted by 4 members , the Chair will discuss any issues with the questionnaire the Board may wish to raise. Further discussion will take place at Jan meeting
6.	AOB - Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair will as a matter of urgency contact the Head of the Business Unit and the Departments Assistant Secretary.
6.	AOB – Dates of next meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board agreed the upcoming meeting dates for 2022.