NOAC

National Oversight and Audit Commission

Dublin City Council Scrutiny Report

NOAC Report No. 55 – March 2023
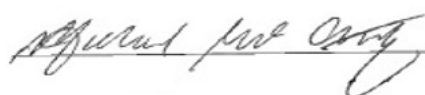
NOAC
National Oversight
and Audit Commission

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 have 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
16th March 2023**

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 then NOAC Chair, 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. Specifically, 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 deferred.

The COVID restrictions presented 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 via 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 had a significant impact on local authorities, and in particular, for NOAC on the Scrutiny process. The Stage 1 meetings were all held in person, but restrictions curtailed their activities in 2021. Stage 1 meetings were held with Meath and South Dublin in July 2021 and Fingal in October 2021. The Stage 2 meetings progressed, as these were capable of being held remotely, with one held in January 2021 with Limerick City and County Council, another with Meath in September 2021 and a further meeting with South Dublin in December 2021.

2022

2022 saw an increase in the number of scrutiny meetings held with local authorities. Stage 1 meetings were held with Dublin City Council in March 2022, with Cavan and Leitrim County Councils and Dublin City Council in June 2022. Further Stage 1 meetings took place later in the year, with Wexford and Galway County Councils, in September 2022. Several stage two meetings were also progressed, with Wexford and Leitrim County Councils and Galway City Council, in October 2022.

Future meetings and reports

This report outlines the purpose and the procedures of such reports and, while the process may continue to evolve, it is not currently expected to produce another master report, similar to the master report produced in May 2021. It is intended that once all stages in the scrutiny process have been 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. 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. In 2022 and as noted above, 3 Stage 2 and 6 Stage 1 meetings were held with Scrutiny reports being prepared for the completed Stage 2 meetings. So far, in 2023, there have been four Stage 1 and two Stage 2 meetings held, with several more due to take place throughout the year.

Conclusion

The process thus far allowed for the NOAC Chair 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, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Dublin City Council had their Stage 1 meeting in June 2022 and their Stage 2 meeting in January 2023. 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. In addition, it should be noted that the relevant information from Performance Indicator Report 2020 is included in this report, as is information from the Review of Local Authority and Regional Assembly Corporate Plans 2019–2024. The NOAC highlights the following points arising out of these meetings with Dublin City Council:

- NOAC was interested to hear of the Council's Smart City Unit, which promotes increased use of technology to improve city services and involves collaboration with academia, industry and entrepreneurs.

- NOAC was interested in hearing about the Council's Statement of Internal Control, which sets out how the Council functions as an organisation and outlines all the different controls which are available.

- NOAC was pleased to hear that under Dublin City's Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024, it is committed to a 40% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and has the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.

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Dublin City Council Scrutiny Process

1

NOAC Profile Dublin City Council

June 2022

Contents

Dublin City Council General Information

Local authority	Dublin City Council
Population:	554,554
Area:	115 sq km
Municipal Districts:	N/A
2021 Budget	€1,079.6 billion (Revenue)

Number employed @ 31/12/2021	5,571.65 (WTE)
WTE Staff per 1,000 population	0.0995
% of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave	2.43%
Housing Information @ 31/12/21	
Local Authority Stock number	24,575
Number currently on waiting list	Housing list: 13,018 Housing Transfer list: 16,505
HAP Tenancies	1,226
Homeless presentations	Adult individuals (4,366)
Any specific housing issues	Housing delivery challenges
Short Information Paragraph	
Council Mission Statement	Dublin City Council: Leading and delivering for the City. To drive the sustainable development of the City through strong civic leadership and delivery of effective services that promote the well-being and quality-of-life of citizens and communities.
Overview	Dublin City Council is the largest Local Authority in Ireland, employing approximately 5,600 staff. The 2023 Revenue Budget amounts to €1.24 billion, while the three-year Capital Programme 2023 to 2025 amounts to €2.86 billion. The Council provides a wide and diverse range of services to the citizens of Dublin City (population in excess of 550,000), to businesses and to visitors to the city. Activities are carried out in both the physical works area (e.g. provision and maintenance of housing, roads) and in the areas of arts, sports, recreation and social services (e.g. art gallery, libraries, sports facilities, parks, community development and housing welfare services). The City Council also provides an emergency ambulance service through Dublin Fire Brigade for the Dublin area and homeless services also for the Dublin area through the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive.

Economic Forum (CEF)	Operating as an Economic Forum, the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) comprised of councillors, industry and community representatives oversees, formulates and implement policies, initiatives and programmes designed to encourage greater collaboration, awareness and development regarding relevant economic, enterprise and innovation challenges and opportunities facing the city. In addition it hosts the annual Dublin City Summit Series at which, key stakeholders converge to share insights, information and perspectives regarding relevant policy issues. Dublin City Council, through the Local Enterprise Office, Economic Development Office and Dublin Place Brand Office, lead on and support the implementation of numerous policies, strategies, projects and plans such as:
	▪ Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024
	▪ Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028 (Forthcoming)
	▪ Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028
	▪ Local Enterprise Office Dublin City – Development Plan 2021 - 2024
	▪ Dublin City Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024
	▪ Community Wealth Building
	▪ Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor
	▪ Night Time Economy National Task Force
	▪ Dublin Place Brand Strategic Development – www.dublin.ie
	▪ Dublin Economic Monitor www.dublineconomy.ie
	▪ Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards
	▪ Dublin City EU Programme Participation Strategy
The Local Enterprise Office	The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) were set up under the Local Government Act 2014 and through a service level agreement between the Local Authorities (in this case Dublin City Council) and Enterprise Ireland provide support to start, grow and develop micro businesses in each local area. The diverse range of business supports provided by LEO Dublin City www.localenterprise.ie/dublincity to the business community in the city ranges from awards, promotion, mentoring, networking, financial and training supports. In 2021 LEO Dublin City awarded €2.8 million in financial supports and just under 7,000 clients attended training, networking and mentoring events.

Retail Incentives	Dublin County Council operates a Shop Front Improvement Scheme which supports the enhancement and restoration of shopfronts and business premises via grants and advice. The purpose of the scheme is to support businesses to make their premises more attractive and subsequently enhance the local area to attract increased local and visitor footfall.
	Retailers are also encouraged to participate in various training programmes provided by the Economic Development Office/Local Enterprise Office in collaboration with other partners. These programmes aim to support retail and other businesses regarding their operations and development, and include MODOS (circular economy training), ENFUSE (MSc. Student team assistance), Breakthrough Innovation Programme, LEAN for Micro and Green for Micro and the newly introduced Digital Voucher.
	The MODOS circular economy training www.modos.ie programme for micro, small and medium sized businesses was developed in collaboration with the Eastern Midlands Waste Region Office. Many retail businesses have availed of this training and attended MODOS networking events. The latest MODOS training was run in collaboration with LEO Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and with financial support from the EPA.
	Businesses have also been supported in their Digital transition and ability to grow their e-commerce capacity with the very popular trading online voucher which built the resilience of many businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic and allowed them to sell locally and internationally. There is a renewed focus on export potential of businesses with targeted training and availability of financial support through the Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant (TAME) to exhibit at international trade shows.
	The Dublin Place Brand team developed a number of campaigns during the pandemic designed to encourage people to "Support Local Business" and to "Make A Day of It" by visiting retail, hospitality and visitor attraction and cultural venues. Outdoor marketing materials and a social media campaign were developed showcasing business owners, who featured in specially commissioned videos and photographs in seven city centre locations highlighting the options available.
	We also supported the City Recovery office in campaigns designed to increase footfall in the city centre locations, which in turn supports retail spend. LEO Dublin City operated the "Look for Local" campaign where we showcased a number of local businesses who are clients of the LEO office. Cloud Picker coffee was one of the businesses that we created a case study for, who have a retail premises on Pearse Street. Their image was projected onto the side of Palace Street, beside City Hall, as part of this campaign.

The Corporate Plan	The Dublin City Council Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 was prepared in compliance with the Local Government Act 2001 and the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The Plan recognises and takes into account a range of existing National and European policies, strategies and plans in relation to programmes and activities that are central to our goals and priority objectives for the next five years: dublin-city-council-corporate-plan-2020-2024.pdf (dublincity.ie)
Shared services	Dublin City Council provides the following shared services (Dublin; Regional; National) ■ Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) ■ Dublin Fire Brigade ■ Waste Enforcement Lead Regional Authority ■ Dublin Metropolitan CARO ■ Voter.ie ■ National Library Management System ■ National Building Control Office ■ National TransFrontier Shipment Office (Competent Authority) ■ City and County Valuation Services ■ Irish Water Service Level Agreement
Regional Issues including new developments and initiatives	■ Housing delivery and affordability ■ Urban regeneration: City Edge, a joint project between the City Council and South Dublin County Council to regenerate lands at Naas Road, Ballymount and Park West, will comprise mixed use areas with residential, employment, community and retail uses and high quality integrated green spaces ■ Climate action: Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Planning Office (EMRWMPO) in collaboration with the Dublin CARO and with the DCC Climate Officer deliver various public awareness events and projects including the Eat the Streets project and Climate Action Week ■ Regional collaboration on major climate action projects, including the Electric Vehicle Strategy, and preparation of a plan to reduce ambient nitrogen dioxide levels in the Dublin region ■ Enterprise: Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 ■ Inclusion: Review of the City Council's Social Inclusion Strategy under proposals currently being developed for Dublin as part of the Regional Enterprise Strategy (RES). ■ Technology and innovation: Smart Dublin, an initiative of the 4 Dublin local authorities, focused on trialling and scaling innovative solutions to a wide range of current and emerging challenges such as climate, digital divide, mobility and tourism

Supporting Strategies	
	■ To work towards achieving a green, low carbon city
	■ To build safe, thriving neighbourhoods
	■ To continue to grow a strong diverse economy
	■ To promote compact growth with connected infrastructure
	■ To support and engage active, inclusive communities
	■ To sustain a vibrant cultural life
	■ To become a more responsive, innovative City Council
	Relevant Local, Regional and National Strategies
	Local Strategies
	■ Dublin City Development Plan 2016 – 2022
	■ Dublin City Local Economic & Community Plan 2016–2021
	■ Dublin City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2019 – 2024
	■ Dublin Environmental Noise Action Plan December 2018 – July 2023
	■ Dublin City Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 – 2020
	■ North Bull Island UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Periodic Review (September 2014)
	■ Dublin City Parks Strategy 2019 – 2022
	■ Dublin City Tree Strategy 2016 – 2020
	■ The Heart of Dublin. City Centre Public Realm Masterplan 2016 – 2034
	■ Dublin City Housing Strategy / Housing Programme 2018 – 2021
	■ The Homelessness Action Plan Framework for Dublin 2019 – 2021
	■ Dublin City Council Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme 2017 – 2022
	■ Dublin City Promoting Economic Development 2018 – 2021
	■ Dublin City Gallery: The Hugh Lane. Five year Strategy 2018 – 2023
	■ Libraries Unlimited. A Strategic Direction for Dublin City Public Libraries 2019 – 2023
	■ Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018 – 2022
	■ Dublin City Sport and Wellbeing Strategy, 2017–2020
	■ Integration Strategy 2016 – 2020
	■ Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy 2014 – 2019
	■ Age Friendly Charter

Supporting Strategies	Regional and National Strategies
	- The National Adaptation Framework - The National Mitigation Plan - National Climate Plan - Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy - Project Ireland 2040 (the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan) - Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2016 - 2035 - Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2021 - Rebuilding Ireland - Our Public Service 2020 - The Public Sector Data Strategy 2019 – 2023 - Public Service ICT Strategy - National Digital Strategy
Any other relevant information	**City Recovery** In early 2021 the City Council established an Office of City Recovery to support city businesses and other stakeholders in addressing the challenges posed by the impact of the pandemic on city living and the city economy. The Office reports to a high level City Recovery Taskforce chaired by the Lord Mayor. A key part of the work of the Office of City Recovery has been ongoing engagement with all stakeholders in the City Centre. This includes elected representatives, citizens, business representative groups and individual businesses of varying sizes, statutory and non-statutory agencies. The Office continues to work with all stakeholders in the City, including other City Council Departments, to identify and develop appropriate initiatives to help drive the City's recovery post pandemic. **URDF** In 2021, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage confirmed preliminary approval for inclusion of Dublin City Council's North Inner City Concept Area 1 and South Inner City Concept Area 2 for €164 million in capital support under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and approval to move to the next stage of the project lifecycle. The Deliver Parnell Square Cultural Quarter project successfully attracted URDF funding, with the award announced in March 2021.

Any other relevant information	**Active Travel**
	The Active Travel Programme Office (AcTPrO) is responsible for the delivery of the Active Travel Network, funded by the National Transport Authority (NTA).
	AcTPrO continues to plan the overall strategy for delivering a connected core active travel network for the city, while keeping a number of projects moving, such as the Clontarf to City Centre and also getting a greater number of projects started.
	AcTPrO has been working closely with the NTA to establish an Active Travel Network that is necessary to facilitate safer cycling throughout the city. This network is within the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) approved network and will comprise approximately 310 km of which 210 km will be delivered by the AcTPrO.
	A key element of the execution plan will be to grow an interim network of protected cycling facilities. This will involve the building of light segregated cycling facilities over the next two years, where possible. This infrastructure will subsequently be made into more enduring infrastructure. AcTPrO has now commenced the development of an implementation programme for this network. A formal launch is scheduled for September 2022.
	District Heating Programme
	The Dublin District Heating System (DDHS) will be a thermal energy network that uses energy from waste heat and distributes it as hot water through insulated dual (supply and return) pipe lines to homes and business for space heating, hot water and industrial purposes.
	Dublin City Council intend to develop the DDHS through the establishment of a Joint Venture company with a Private Partner. The Joint Venture Company will be responsible for designing, building, funding, operating and retailing the district heating scheme. The project has an overall estimated capital investment of approximately €73 million, which will be invested in the development of the distribution network, Energy Centre customer connections and training and upskilling of staff within the traditional energy sector for this new utility in Ireland.
	The procurement process for the JV Partner, commenced in Q3 2021 - procurement will take 18 to 24 months to complete.
	It is anticipated that the DH network will be operational in late 2024, early 2025 in line with completion of the Poolbeg West Development.

Collection Rates

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Rate collection rates	84%	94%	92%	91%	90%	88%	84%
Rent collection rates	73%	73%	76%	76%	78%	80%	78%
Housing loan collection rates	75%	75%	69%	66%	66%	59%	58%

The collection of commercial rates was steadily increasing until 2020, when the collection rate declined due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. The rate collections were 84% in 2014 and hit a high of 94% in 2019, before dropping back to 84% in 2020, which is significantly ahead of the national average of 76%.

Rent collections have decreased over the years, going from 78% in 2014 to 73% in 2020. This is well below the national average of 88.3% for 2020.

Housing loans collection rates have greatly increased since 2014, when it was at 58% and now stands at over 75%, which is slightly below the average collection rate of 79.4% for 2020.

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.

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. From the reports published to date matters relevant to Dublin City Council are outlined in the points below.

NOAC REPORT NO 46

Review of Local Authority and Regional Assembly

Corporate Plans 2019–2024 – November 2021

In November 2021, NOAC published its review of the corporate plans of local authorities and regional assemblies for the period 2019 - 2024. The purpose of the report is to review the adequacy of the plans and to assist with the further development of good practice in corporate planning. In the report, examples of good practice in relation to both the process of developing the plans, and the content of the plans are highlighted. Cavan County Council has been successful in covering these areas within its Corporate Plan.

Under the process, areas considered for review included:

- The pre-plan consultation, which looks at how local authorities formulated the Corporate Plan, consulted with stakeholders and engaged with elected members.

- Review of the Corporate Plans. This investigated how local authorities proposed to review the progress of their Corporate Plans.

- Integration of the Corporate Plan with other policies and strategies, which examined the extent to which local authorities consulted other policy reports and strategies when devising their Corporate Plans.

- Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. Under this heading, it was examined as to how local authorities engaged with the issue of human rights.

Examining the contents of the Corporate Plans, the following were among the areas reviewed:

- Vision and Mission: Strategies and Objectives. This detailed local authorities' visions, mission statements and broad goals during the life of the plan. It focused on the setting of actions and goals to deliver these broad objectives and visions.

- Financial resourcing of the Corporate Plan and how risks to the delivery of the Corporate Plan can be examined, taking into account how Councils are dependent on voted capital funds from central government.

- Measuring and mitigating risk. This examines where local authorities depend on other external providers and other public bodies to successfully deliver certain services. This involves risk which can be mitigated through appropriate oversight, including service level agreements.

Dublin City Council is alluded to specifically in the section of the report outlined below:

Under the heading of evidence of pre-plan consultation for the Corporate Plan, the report quotes Dublin City's Corporate Plan in stating that as part of its goal to "support and engage active, inclusive communities", Dublin City Council has a "priority objective" to "facilitate active citizenship in city communities and engagement with key stakeholders." This objective lists two relevant bullet points:

- "Make all of our public consultations available on the City Council's online consultation hub, as well as in traditional formats."

- "Manage the Your Dublin, Your Voice platform to gain the views of people on a range of issues."

The report states that it is clear from Dublin City Council that an existing platform for public engagement was used to inform the corporate plan. Using an existing engagement platform provides an opportunity for continual engagement with external bodies throughout the delivery of the plan.

NOAC REPORT NOS 44 AND 26

Performance Indicator Reports 2020 and 2019

- **Housing.** Dublin City owned 26,467 social housing dwellings at the end of 2020 with 2.64% vacant, compared to a national average of 3.18%. In 2019 Dublin City owned 26,150 social houses and had a vacancy rate of 2.75% compared to a national average of 3.15%. In 2020 the average time for rehousing in vacant properties in Dublin City was 15.17 weeks, which is much lower than the national average of 32.69 weeks. Similarly, in 2019 the average time for rehousing in vacant properties in Dublin City was 16.77 weeks, which was much lower than the national average of 28.17 weeks.

- **Environment.** 22% of the City is unpolluted or litter-free (11% in 2019). 52% of the area is slightly polluted (55% in 2019) and 20% is moderately polluted (29% in 2019). The national average figures for being unpolluted or litter-free in 2020 was 22% and was 17% for being moderately polluted.

- **Green Flag status.** At the end of 2020, 34% of schools in the county held a Green Flag, a decrease from the 40.2% in 2019. The national average in 2020 was 41.83% and was 47.96% in 2019.

- **Fire service.** It took an average of 1:28 minutes to mobilise fire brigades for calls to fires, similar to the 1:25 minutes of 2019.

- **Libraries.** There was an average of 1.2 visits per head of population (above the national average of 1.05) and 1,308,548 items issued to library borrowers in 2020. For 2019 the figures were 4.57 visits (above the national average of 3.57) and 1,815,186 items borrowed. The lower figures for 2020 reflects the library closures during that year, owing to COVID.

- **Staff total.** Whole-time equivalent staff employed by Dublin City Council at the end of 2020 was 5,618.3. This compares to 5,641.9 for the end of 2019.

- **Sick leave.** Dublin City's medically certified sick leave rate is 2.78% (compared to 3.13% in 2019), making it one of the local authorities which met the public sector sick leave target of 3.5%. Dublin City's self-certified sick leave rate was 0.21% in 2020. The national average is 0.20%.

- **Technology & Social media.** In the 2020 Performance indicators this heading was amended to represent the results as per capita. Previously this indicator was represented as the total visitors to the local authority website and followers on social media. The per capita total page views of Dublin City's websites in 2020 was 28.42, which compares to an average of 15.56 across all local authorities. The per capita total number of followers at the end 2020 of its social media accounts was 1.19, as opposed to an average of 0.81 across all local authorities.

- **Public lighting.** NOAC introduced the E6: Public Lighting indicator for the 2020 report. The National Public Lighting Steering Group are exploring options to reduce energy consumption and upgrade the existing Public Lighting asset to a state of the art public service. A project was established with the primary aim of enabling local authorities reach their statutory energy efficiency target and the Project will also significantly help local authorities reach their new 2030 target of 50%. Dublin City reported the highest amount of billable wattage at 20,407.00 kilowatts per hour.

- **Public liability.** NOAC introduced this as a new indicator for 2020. The indicator measures the cost per capita of insurance claims for local authorities over a period of three years. The cost of insurance and settling claims impacts the available funds of local authorities to carry out other services. In 2018, Dublin City had the highest cost of settled claims per capita at €23.87. This reduced to €22.05 in 2019 and to €14.55 in 2020.

NOAC REPORT NO 22

Performance Indicator Report 2018

- **New House building inspections** rose from 17.86% in 2014 to 69.7% in 2018 (68.34% in 2019 and 70.03% in 2020).

- **Cost per capita of the planning service** increased marginally from €24.27 in 2014 to €28.6 in 2018 (€30.44 in 2019 and €30.37 in 2020).

- **The cost of the library service** only fluctuated slightly over the years, at €42.78 in 2014 to €42.99 in 2018 (€46.74 in 2019 and €44.11 in 2020). This compares to a national average cost of €35.95 across all local authorities in 2020.

- **The % of households availing of the 3 bin service** increased from 39.24% in 2014 to 48.5% in 2018 (and continues to increase, to 51.54% in 2019 and 67.12% in 2020).

Full figures for all Performance Indicator reports are included in a table below.

NOAC REPORT NO 18

Customer Satisfaction Survey July 2018

- In 2018, Ipsos MRBI was commissioned by NOAC to conduct a survey among the general public to establish their satisfaction with their local authority. A face-to-face in-home CAPI (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing) methodology is utilised and quota controls ensured that participants are representative of the local authority population by age, gender and social class.

- The first survey, conducted in 2018, surveyed the 10 largest local authorities. The second survey, completed in March 2019, was conducted with the 10 medium sized local authorities and Galway City. The remaining 10 local authorities were surveyed in 2020. Dublin City was included in the 2018 survey.

- 53% of respondents were satisfied with Dublin City Council, which was exactly in line with the average level of satisfaction with all Councils, which was also 53%.

- 36% believed that Dublin City promotes economic activity compared to the average of 48%.

- 26% of people felt that Dublin City provides good value for money, where the average was 27% across all local authorities.

- 38% of people believe that Dublin City is doing a good job, compared to the overall satisfaction rating of 47%.

NOAC REPORT NO 17

Internal Audit in Local Authorities – July 2018

- Local authorities were asked whether the audit committee had conducted an assessment of the adequacy of Internal Audit resources, including staff skills, within the last 2 years. Dublin City was one of 17 authorities which had done so.

- The Head of Internal Audit reports to the Chief Executive (CE) and Director of Finance in seven authorities, including Dublin City.

- In response to the question as to whether any External Quality Assurance review of Internal Audit has been undertaken, only six local authorities, including Dublin City, confirmed that this was the case.

- When questioned if 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, only five local authorities, including Dublin City, confirmed this to be the case.

NOAC REPORT NO 12

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

Number of Housing Estates managed by each Local Authority

Dublin City ranked twelfth with respect to the number of housing estates managed by a local authority, at 207 dwelling units. Dublin City had the second highest number of houses in an estate, with 369.

Measures to Maximise Occupancy

High Demand Housing Prioritised

Prioritising the refurbishment of housing in high demand areas was another method being used by local authorities to minimise vacancies. Six local authorities, including Dublin City Council, said that this was an approach that they employed.

There were still more than 2,800 bedsits in local authority ownership, mainly in Dublin City Council.

NOAC REPORT NO 10

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

	2014	2020
Number of Registered Tenancies	69,396	75,103
% Units inspected	2.2	2.96
Inspected Failed %	60.2	78.1

Data from report relates to 2014, data for 2020 taken from Performance Indicator Report

DUBLIN CITY

	Performance Indicators	2020 Data	2020 Median/Average	2019 Data	2019 Median/Average	2018 Data	2018 Median/Average	2017 Data	2017 Median/Average	2016 Data	2016 Median/Average	2015 Data	2015 Median/Average	2014 Data	2014 Median/Average
H1	Social Housing provided in year per 1,000 population	0.67	0.64	0.99	1.15	1.08	0.84	0.93	0.53	n/a	3.43	1.09	1.91	0.92	0.80
H2	% of directly provided dwellings vacant at 31/12	2.64	3.18	2.75	3.15	3.1	2.77	4.39	2.73	5.33	3.02	6.29	3.5	6.67	3.8
H3a	Average time from vacation date to PI year re-letting date (weeks)	15.17	32.69	16.77	28.17	16.79	27.75	18.93	28.9	20.31	32.99	20.15	28.43	23.35	31.43
H3b	Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	€21,346.12	€19,065.30	€23,835.63	€18,336.85	€25,083.85	€18,590.28	€18,570.04	€17,160.60	19,680.78	€15,877	19,986.01	€13,378.40	15,875.17	€11,534.91
H4	Average repair and maintenance cost per unit	€2,441.06	€1,119.82	€2,498.76	€1,168.99	€2,450.44	€841.83	€2,591.96	€1,311.82	2,809.03	€1,500.23	2,639.34	€1,292.57	2,680.49	€1,272.30
H5	Inspections (Dwellings inspected in 2020) carried out in year as % of registrations	2.96	6.73	7.70	9.93	8.76	7.39	1.81	4.96	2.40	4.36	3.45	5.64	3.62	6.51
R1a	% Regional Road KM that ever received a PSCI rating	7.4	77	83.06	99	95	99.36	100	96	99.00	99	64.00	68	12.30	47.9
R1b	% Total Regional Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	31.2	31.19	31.28	38.28	32	37.58	88	28	82.00	30	21.00	20	43.43	11.15
R1c	% Total Primary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	21.7	24.00	16.78	23.08	16	23.39	37	20	13.00	13	11.00	11	28.62	6.4
R1d	% Total Secondary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	14.8	17.66	13.77	17.67	14	15.19	18	14	12.00	10	10.00	8	22.76	4.61
R1e	% Total Tertiary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	10.6	13.93	10.96	14.23	16	12.42	17	8	15.00	7	15.00	5	28.07	3.63
R2a	KM Regional Road strengthened using road improvement grants	10.4	14.7	15.30	13.17	7.3	13.4	6.8	10.3	12.30	10.8	3.90	10.2		

Ref	Performance Indicators	2014	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016	2017	2017	2018	2018	2019	2019	2020	2020
R2b	KM Regional road resealed using road maintenance grants			8.3	0.00	12.2	n/a	11.9	n/a	15.3	n/a	14.27	n/a	19.4	n/a
R2/3	% Motor tax transactions performed online	54.7	71.79	56.6	77.80	64.05	83.29	65.95	84.66	69.15	85.63	70.21	86.87	81.52	92.01
W1	% private schemes with water quality in compliance	97.9	N/A	99.07	N/A	97.77	n/a	98.46	n/a	97.1	n/a	97.50	n/a	No data available	No data available
E1	% households availing of a 3-bin service	31.66	39.24	34.87	42.54	37.7	45.10	39.53	47.48	43.91	48.50	48.36	51.54	89.73	67.12
E2	Pollution cases on hand at year end as % of the cases that arose that year			8.49	0.81	9.91	99.97	9.79	1.3	11.00	2.08	9.28	3.16	10.38	4.49
E3	% area unpolluted or litter free	9.5	14.00	14	18.00	13	11.00	10	13	19.00	14	15.00	11.00	22	22
P1	New buildings inspected as % of new buildings notified	17.71	3.62	24	96.87	19.42	75.13	17	82.87	16.75	69.7	23.90	68.34	15.28	70.03
P2	% of determinations that confirmed the decision made by LA	71.7	76.92	71.88	78.40	77.78	78.66	79	82.14	75.92	78.71	73.07	81.76	73.17	81.07
P3	Ratio of planning cases being investigated at year end as to cases closed	2.88	2.47	2.61	2.09	2.87	2.06	2.41	2.74	3.03	3.12	2.74	2.72	3.74	2.74
P4	Cost per capita of the Planning Service	€25.27	24.27	€26.76	23.76	€26.96	24.86	28.31	€26.59	29.24	28.6	€30.27	30.44	31.47	30.37
F1	Cost per capita of Fire Service (based on 2016 Census)	€55.9	74.13	€57.88	80.58	€56.07	75.65	57.74	78.54	53.85	84.84	€60.79	84.84	79.93	87.21
F2	Average time to mobilise Brigade re Fire (Minutes) (FT)	1.66	1.41	1.6	1.41	1.5	1.46	1.45	1.48	1.42	A	1:24	1:25	1:28	1:28
F3	% of Fire Cases in which first attendance is within 10 minutes	58.6	77.92	56.98	78.21	57.79	77.92	40.45	75.24	52.92	71.05	55.14	75.25	55.30	73.44
L1a	No. of Library visits per head of population	3.71	5.23	3.68	4.74	3.61	4.62	3.56	4.69	3.50	4.58	3.57	4.57	1.05	1.2

	Performance Indicators	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
L1b	No. of Items borrowed per head of population		3.82	4.51	3.82	4.16	3.82	2.92	4.14	3.00	3.55	3.14	3.28	2.19	2.37
L2	Cost of Library Service per capita	€29.41	42.78	€30.02	42.61	€30.05	42.99	31.00	42.99	€42.99	30.52	€34.94	46.74	35.95	44.11
Y1	% of local schools involved in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme	51.86	37.19	67.59	36.71	68.07	35.44	69.04	37.97	28.21	80.00	68.30	46.15	63.29	37.18
C1	WTE staff per 1,000 population	5.63	10.32	5.58	10.06	5.64	9.54	5.75	9.77	5.99	9.96	5.95	10.20	6.06	10.16
C2a	% of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave in year	3.34	3.10	3.52	3.73	3.76	3.78	3.74	3.97	3.62	3.74	3.13	3.71	3.01	2.78
C2b	% of paid working days lost to self-certified sick leave in year	0.4	0.57	0.39	0.56	0.38	0.52	0.33	0.52	0.36	0.35	0.40	0.36	0.20	0.21
C3	LA website page views per 1,000 population	9,651	11,784.53	11,666	21,218.37	12,422	21,705.34	14,632	27,590.3	33,167.01	16,210.00	16,572	29,036.94	N/A	N/A
C4	Overall cost of ICT Provision per WTE	€2,646.8	2,004.28	€2,680.15	2,015.08	€2,675.69	1,925.43	€3,048.41	2,007.53	2,006.77	2,894.57	3,060.84	2,417.91	3,457.02	2,658.64
M2a	% Commercial Rates Collected in year	77	84.00	83	88.00	82.3	90.00	83	91	92	86.00	87	94	76	84
M2b	% Rent & Annuities Collected in year	84	78.00	85	80.00	88.0	78.00	89	76	76	89.00	89.80	73	88.3	73
M2c	% Housing Loans Collected in year	67	58.00	68	59.00	70	66.00	74	66	69	75.00	78	75	79.4	75
J1	LEO jobs output per 1,000 population	0.73	0.83	0.66	0.44	0.7	0.42	0.68	0.42	0.62	0.77	0.64	0.49	-0.30	-0.03
E6	Total billable wattage of the public lighting system											6,209		20,407	
M3	Per capita total cost of settled claims for 2020									11.62	23.87	13.53	22.05	12.21	14.55
M4	Total payroll costs as a % of revenue expenditure													26.75	33.75

2

Stage 1 meeting with Dublin City Council

Date:	28th June at 12 p.m., WebEx online meeting	
In attendance:	**Dublin City Council** ■ Owen Keegan, Chief Executive ■ Eileen Quinlivan, Assistant Chief Executive, Human Resources, Corporate Services & Transformation ■ Kathy Quinn, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Finance	**NOAC** ■ Michael McCarthy, Chair NOAC ■ Alan McDermott, NOAC Executive ■ John Goldrick, NOAC Executive

NOAC's profile for Dublin City Council was issued in advance of the meeting and formed the basis for the discussion on the day. At a later stage, a second meeting between Dublin City Council and the NOAC Board will take place. The NOAC Chair invited the CE to give an overview of the Council and the issues facing it. The CE gave a presentation, which is included at the end of these minutes. Matters discussed in detail were:

Background to Dublin City Council

Dublin City is the economic engine of the State. The Council works to improve the appeal of the City as a place to live and work. The City Council itself is made up of a Lord Mayor and 62 Councillors. It is organised into seven Strategic Policy Committees and five Area Committees.

Budget

The revenue budget for 2022 stands at €1.13 billion. The Council noted that this its revenue is quite evenly split between government grants, rates and goods and services with some other smaller sources of revenue. The Council has a three year capital programme from 2022 to 2024 of €2.401 billion, with housing accounting for 63% of that programme.

Council employees.

At the end of 2021, the Council had 5,346 permanent employees (full time equivalents), of which 936 were firefighters. At its peak (December 2008), the Council had 6,932 employees (full time equivalents). Despite the recovery in the economy since 2014, the Council's employment level is still approximately 20% lower than its peak level in 2008. Additionally, there are over 4,700 pensioners who need to be provided for financially. The number of pensioners will continue to increase.

Impact of Covid

During this period, 80% of office based staff were working from home. The Council is satisfied that it generally maintained its services during Covid, except in the case of services, which were subject to direct Covid restrictions (e.g. sports centres and libraries). It was highlighted that the fire service was under additional pressure due to the number of Covid cases among its staff, the extra time taken to deal with ppe, sterilising ambulances after patient transfer and the longer delays in handing over patients to hospital care. The Council noted that outdoor staff were moved to pod based working and it was found that Covid infection rates were broadly similar when comparing outdoor and indoor staff. Council revenue was also impacted during this time but was supported by funding from central government. Significant revenue was invested into the city economy by the City Council to facilitate outdoor dining and to encourage people into the city.

Innovation

The Council has a Smart City Unit which promotes increased use of technology to improve city services and involves collaboration with academia, industry and entrepreneurs. Some of the projects highlighted were the Smart Docklands project which acts as a smart city testbed for new technology and the 'Procurement by Challenge' initiative which invites solutions to specified problems from the market. Additionally, the Dublin Economic Monitor is a joint initiative on behalf of the four Dublin local authorities to track developments in the capital's economy. The Monitor includes the MasterCard Spending Pulse which delivers insights into consumer and tourist spending trends. In collaboration with MasterCard, the Spending Pulse gives insights into retail sales, e-commerce and other areas to examine Dublin's economy.

Key challenges

The Council highlighted a number of challenges such as the need to support the recovery of the city economy from the Covid era. It was noted that the Council has experienced supply constraints in delivering its capital programme and especially the delivery on new housing units. Its housing programme covers over 15,000 units at various stages in the process.

The Covid period was a major challenge, though local authorities performed well at this time and central government intervened to provide much needed assistance.

MyPay system

Dublin City Council is committed to implementing the Core HR system, which is the first step of the process of becoming part of the MyPay system.

Data collection for NOAC PI reports

The Council is in the midst of establishing a Data Analytics Unit, which will speed up the process of supplying data for PI reports. The SEO in Corporate Services acts as the data co-ordinator for Dublin City Council.

Homelessness

There was a significant decrease in the number of adults in emergency accommodation in 2020. This was partially enabled by the ability to enter into leases with developers for single units. It was noted that HAP tenancies have dried up and there is a general shortage of rental properties in Dublin. Homeless numbers have begun to increase after a period of decline. The Dublin Region Homeless Executive, which operates under the City Council, has responsibility for the provision of homeless services on behalf of the four Dublin local authorities.

Local enterprise

The Council has been pro-active in encouraging the retail sector after the Covid restrictions. It has facilitated outdoor dining by granting licences/permits and by not applying charges. It was noted that outdoor dining is probably viable for approximately eight months of the year. It may not be feasible during the core winter months. It was highlighted that the lack of office workers in the city centre has had adverse implications for the retail and hospitality sectors which are also under pressure due to the impact of on-line shopping.

LEO jobs created

There has been a drop in the number of jobs created since 2019 when it was 217 per 100,000. This may have been due to the effects of Covid, where understandably, many people would have held off on setting up businesses during this era.

Climate action

The Council noted that the Active Travel programme, funded by the NTA, includes cycle ways and pedestrian priority measures. Furthermore, it was highlighted that district heating will be funded through a combination of Climate Action Fund grants, the Council's own resources and funding from an equity partner. The Council also noted that it needs significant funding for the retrofitting of its housing stock, particularly since some of its stock is quite old.

Housing loans collection rates

It was highlighted that the collection rate has improved significantly, from 58% in 2014 to 75% in 2020, though it is still below the average collection rate of 79.4% of all local authorities. The Council noted that the housing environment in Dublin is different to the rest of the country. In particular, it finds where it assists funding lower income couples in purchasing houses, they are likely to be a higher risk given the higher cost of housing in Dublin. With a downturn, the Council is more exposed than other local authorities, and more of its loans under-perform. It was highlighted that there has been an increase in mortgage-to-rent units in the City and this has ameliorated the situation.

Technology and social media

Dublin City has a digital communications team and a social media strategy and it constantly looks to stream its online presence. It uses these channels to put out good news stories, though with 130 accounts, there may need to rationalise some of these accounts.

Public liability claims

The Council had a significant drop in the number of claims against it in recent years and noted that up until a few years ago, it was self-insuring itself against claims, with the exception of very large claims where it purchased insurance. In 2017, a decision was made to take out 'ground up' insurance cover. It has now paid off the backlog of accumulated claims under the previous self-insurance regime. The Council also found that the revised 'book of quantum', part of the insurance reforms, has been of significant assistance in reducing the value of claims. The Courts are less inclined to make excessive awards and the Council is winning more of its Court cases. However, the Council's total insurance premiums is in the region of €23 million per year, which is a substantial level of funding to have to set aside from its budget.

The Chair invited Dublin City to attend the full NOAC meeting for a Stage 2 meeting with the Board, later in 2022.

The minutes of this meeting and the future NOAC meeting will be circulated by the NOAC Executive to Dublin City. Once approved, these, along with the Stage 2 minutes and any presentations will be published on the NOAC website.

3

Stage 1 Presentation

Presentation to NOAC

Owen P Keegan,
Chief Executive, Dublin City Council

Tuesday, 28 June

Introduction

'Dublin is an international capital city and is the economic engine of the region and the State.

Dublin City Council seeks to enhance the city's attractiveness as a place in which to invest, to work, to live and to visit. It seeks to take a leading role in shaping the strategic vision for the city.'

Political Structure

Lord Mayor and 62 Councillors

Strategic Policy Committees

      Arts, Culture, Leisure & Recreation
      Economic Development & Enterprise
      Climate Change, Environment & Energy
      Finance
      Housing
      Planning and Urban Form
      Traffic & Transportation

Local Community Development Committee

Audit Committee

5 Area Committees

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Dublin City Council

Organisational Structure

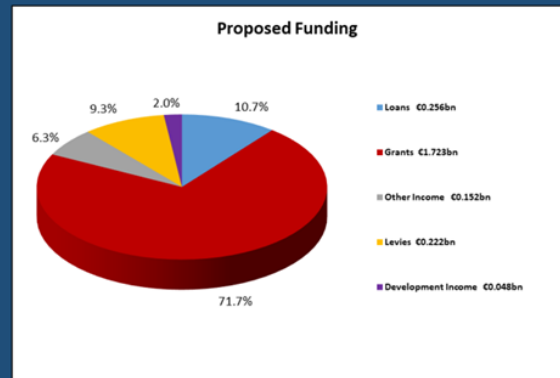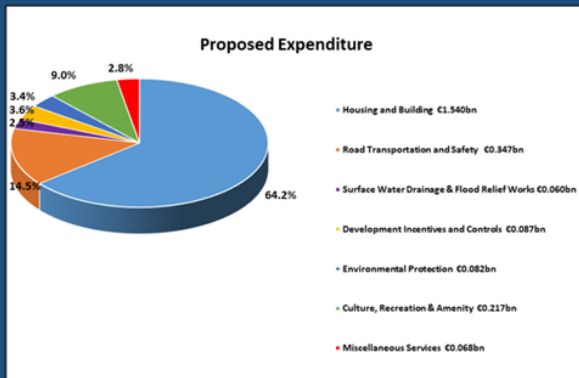|	Core Service Departments	Reporting to
1	Housing, & Community Services	Assistant Chief Executive
2	Environment & Transportation	Assistant Chief Executive
3	Planning & Property Development Culture, Recreation & Economic Services, North & South City Areas	Assistant Chief Executive
4	Fire & Emergency Services	Chief Fire Officer
	Support Departments	
5	Finance & IT	Head of Finance
6	Transformation & Corporate Services Human Resources, Digital Services	Assistant Chief Executive
7	Legal Services	Law Agent

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Dublin City Council

City Council Revenue Budget

Revenue Budget 2022 **€1,130m**

Sources of Revenue Funding

Government Grants	€376m	33.3%
Rates	€367m	32.5%
Goods & Services	€329m	29.1%
LPT	€23m	2.0%
Net Credit Balance	€35m	3.1%
	€1,130m	100%

Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

City Council Capital Programme 2022 to 2024

Proposed Expenditure

- Housing and Building €1.540bn
- Road Transportation and Safety €0.347bn
- Surface Water Drainage & Flood Relief Works €0.060bn
- Development Incentives and Controls €0.087bn
- Environmental Protection €0.082bn
- Culture, Recreation & Amenity €0.217bn
- Miscellaneous Services €0.068bn

2.8% 9.0% 3.4% 3.6% 2.6% 14.5% 64.2%

Proposed Funding

- Loans €0.256bn
- Grants €1.723bn
- Other Income €0.152bn
- Levies €0.222bn
- Development Income €0.048bn

10.7% 2.0% 9.3% 6.3% 71.7%

The City Council approved a Capital Programme for the three years 2022 to 2024 of €2.401bn. Housing accounts for €1.5bn or 63% of the Capital Programme. 72% of funding comes from State grants.

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Dublin City Council

Employment at 31 December 2021 in ftes

Permanent Employees

Senior Management	32
Clerical/admin	1,660
Professional/Technical	549
Outdoor	2,169
Firefighters	936
	5,346

Contract Posts

Temporary	203
Contract	23
	226

	2021	2008	Change 08 to 21	
Total Employees	5,572	6,932	-19.6%	
Total Pensioners	4,750	3,696	+28.5%	

'Dublin City Council is a large organisation, with a wide range of technical/professional expertise. It has a very significant presence in the life of the city and it has a huge impact on the 'quality of life' of those who live in, work in or visit the city.'

Impact of COVID on City Council Services

- Workforce of 5,572 (FTE 31 December 2021)

- Outdoor staff moved to pod-based working to ensure resilience of services.

- Safe working protocols and procedures introduced.

- Up to 80% of office staff working remotely at times. Huge migration to on-line digital services.

- Impact of COVID managed with minimal impact on services (except where closed).

- Dublin Fire Brigade Services under severe pressure at times.

- Council revenue supported by Central Government

- Office of City Recovery
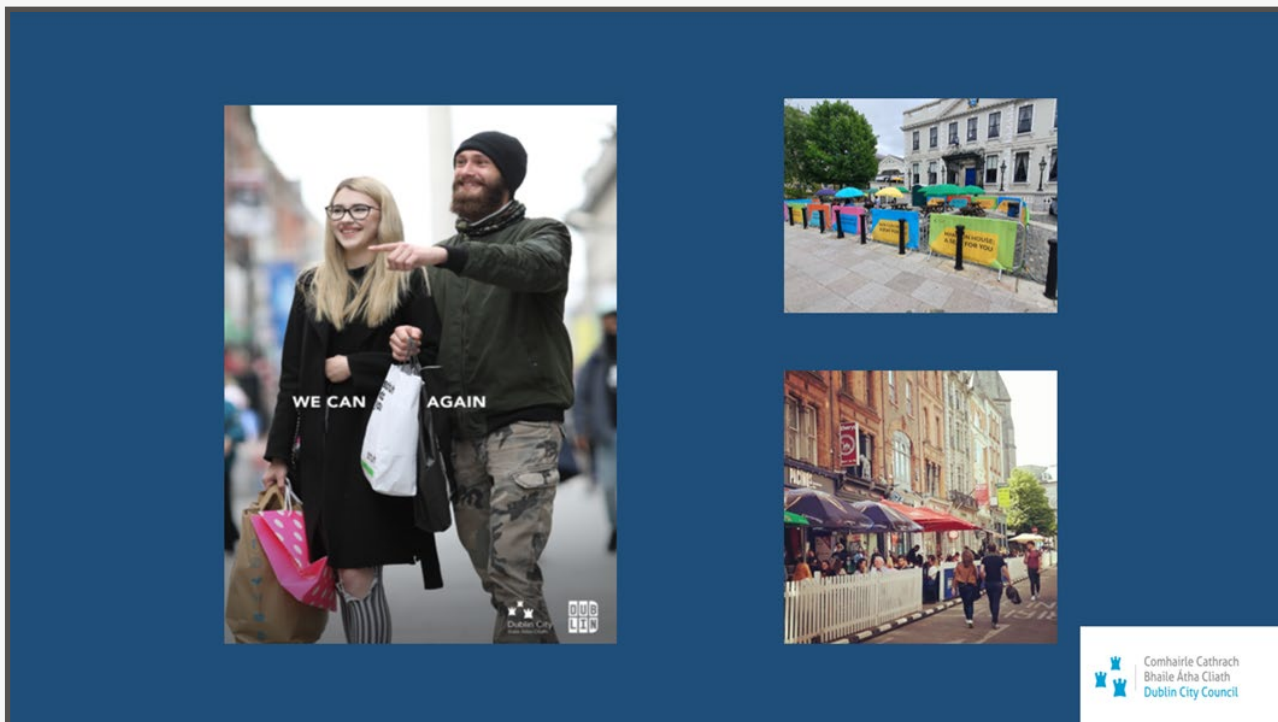
Innovation

Our Smart City Unit promotes the use of technologies that can improve city services through increased efficiencies, reduced costs while encouraging City Council collaboration across academia, industry and entrepreneurs

- **Smart Dockland Project – test bed for new technologies** *smartdocklands.ie*

- **Telecoms Unit to Exploit Potential for Next Generation Mobile Connectivity 5G**

- **IoT & roll out of Sensors – lifebuoys, surface water drainage**
-
- **Google AirView - generating real time measurement of air quality**

- **'*Academy of the Near Future'* programme in partnership with Trinity College Dublin promoting use of technology to build better cities and services** *nearfuture.ie*

- **'Procurement by Challenge'**

- **Dublin Economic Monitor**

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Key Challenges

- Recovery of City Centre post COVID restrictions
- Housing - delivery of expanded Social Housing Programme
  - increasing Housing Supply generally
- Adoption of City Development Plan 2022 to 2028 – Final phase
- Homelessness - responding to the increase in homelessness
- Transportation - accelerating pace pf implementation of Active Travel Measures
- Climate Change - Action/Mitigation Measures
- Delivery of Capital Programme

- **Roll out of Hybrid Working**
- **Directly Elected Mayor for Dublin**

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Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Key Challenges – Housing Delivery

Summary of unit numbers in pipeline	Units
Under Construction	1,244
Tender Stage	666
Acquisitions	491
Part V	1,500 (Current Pipeline - 554)
Regeneration Projects	2,076
Advanced Planning and Design	1,042
Preliminary Planning and Design	2,569
Traveller Housing	71
Long Term Leasing	1,465 (Pipeline for 2022 – 523)
Affordable Purchase	1,802
Cost Rental	2,608
TOTAL	15,534

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Dublin City Council

4

Stage 2 meeting

Final Minutes of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Meeting with Dublin City Council

Date:	Tuesday 11th January 2023 at 10:30 a.m. Stage 2 Scrutiny Meeting.
Venue:	Conference Room, Custom House, Dublin

| Attended by: | **Chair**
■ Michael McCarthy
Members
■ Niall Quinn
■ Fiona Quinn
■ Declan Breathnach
■ Noel Harrington
■ Brian Cawley
Apologies
■ Margaret Lane
■ Ciarán Hayes
Secretariat
■ Claire Gavin
■ Alan McDermott
■ John Goldrick | **By Invite:**
■ Owen Keegan, Chief Executive
■ Eileen Quinlivan, Assistant Chief Executive, Human Resources, Corporate Services & Executive Transformation
■ Kathy Quinn, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Finance |

Meeting with Dublin City Council

NOAC's profile for Dublin City Council was issued in advance of the meeting. The NOAC Chair welcomed the officials from Dublin City Council and invited the Chief Executive (CE) to give an overview of the Council and the issues facing it. The CE gave a presentation and after which the following matters discussed in detail were:

Overview

Dublin City Council seeks to enhance the city's attractiveness as a place to invest, to work, to live and to visit as well as taking a leading role in the development of the city. It is a very significant employer, employing 5,951 people in 2022 of which the fire and ambulance services account for a sizeable proportion of these numbers. With regards trends, Dublin City has seen a significant fall in staffing since 2008 when it had 7,278 employees. This number fell to a low of 5,618 in 2016 and while there has been some recovery to the 2022 figure, this falls far short on 2008. In terms of budget, its revenue for 2023 was €1,241m, of which government grants (35.6%), rates (30.7%) and goods and services (28.1%) made up a significant proportion of that figure. It has a significant capital spending programme for 2023-2025 of €2,86bn with housing accounting for 63.2% of the budget and 72% of the €2,86bn figure coming from state grants.

Housing

The Council noted that housing is one of its key challenges and that there are approximately 15,000 housing units in various stages of the supply chain. These include leased and affordable units and new builds. The Council is under enormous pressure to deliver housing units and wishes to make greater progress in this area. The Council noted that if it is to deliver further housing units beyond 2026 it will require a major land acquisition programme. With regards the delivery of housing, the Council goes to the private market through a tender process to construct houses. Recently, it has bundled together around 1,000 housing units which will be built and operated by a private consortium. The Council is also very keen to support the delivery of housing units through AHBs.

Recruitment:

The Council highlighted that recruitment is a particularly difficult area for it. It is constantly recruiting new staff members, but is also losing significant numbers of staff at the same time. It has particular difficulties in hiring specialist staff, especially construction, finance and IT related specialists. The Council recognised that it doesn't offer the most attractive jobs in the market at present and that there is serious competition within other areas of the public sector as well as from the private sector. One of its issues is an inability to offer people credit for relevant experience for a role, meaning that newly recruited staff have to start at the beginning of the pay scale for a particular position which makes it less attractive. Additionally, it was highlighted that the salaries themselves being offered to potential employees is a barrier to recruitment.

The impact of blended working was raised and noted as being useful but not an advantage over other competitors in the employment market given most are able to offer the same option. Over 100 competitions were run last year, with over 300 different types of jobs within the Council. The Council is trying to re-design its recruitment process and strengthen its employer brand and noted that it conducts exit interviews to ascertain why people are leaving their roles.

Promoting innovation

Dublin City has set up a European Programme Support Office with a dedicated team working on innovation. It also has a Smart City Unit which promotes increased use of technology to improve city services in collaboration with academia, industry and entrepreneurs. Some of the projects highlighted were the Smart Docklands project which acts as a smart city testbed for new technology and the 'Procurement by Challenge' initiative which invites solutions to specified problems from the market.

A new digital services team has been established. The Customer Services Centre takes approximately 120,000 phone calls per year, half of which relate to housing issues. It was highlighted that getting the public to use Council services online frees up a large number of staff for other duties and improves efficiency for them and the public.

The use of technology and tourism was raised and the Council noted that there is a digital tourism app that is available to visitors to Dublin which has a low cost and is of great use for exploring the city.

The Council is also focusing on digitising its internal processes and over the coming year is seeking to roll out a citizen engagement platform and a councillor forum.

The Council wishes to digitise outdoor staff, allowing them to work on a mobile basis.

Finally, a new data analytics unit has also been set up, which assists in supplying data which in turn can be used for the NOAC Performance Indicator reports.

Blended working

This has been offered to staff since June 2020 and a formal blended working application process was introduced in July 2022 enabling staff to work a maximum of two days per week remotely. Approximately 2,500 staff are eligible for these blended working arrangements and it appears that there has been no impact on services. A review will be carried out on blended working and its impacts later in the year.

Service modernisation

One of the impacts of Covid is that there is no longer open access to Dublin City services such as the motor tax office. This means that customers must book an appointment in advance or arrange to use a service in an online platform. The result of this is a move away from the paper office, the eradication of queues and freeing up of staff. As part of this move, there will be new digital services for customers, including text alerts and online customer appointments. There is also a framework around learning and development, which will outline a new way of managing people in a new environment.

Auditing process

The Council has an auditing process for both its income and its expenditure. It was noted that there is an internal audit unit with seven staff, along with the services provided by an external company. A local government auditor, who is separate to the local authority, also examines the work which is undertaken. The Comptroller and Auditor General reviews the capital budget of the Council. Internally, the Council provides a monthly report to the elected members on income and performance and as well as report to the senior management team.

Statement of Internal Control

It was noted that the Statement of Internal Control is not a requirement for Dublin City, but something which it undertakes in the exercise of good corporate governance and accountability to the Elected Members. The Statement has the advantage of clearly setting out how the Council functions as an organisation and outlines all the different controls which are available, a system which the Council ensures functions properly.

Public Spending Code

This is used to improve the Council's capital governance which is provided to the audit committee to review. The Council noted that its procedures are fully aligned with the Public Spending Code and that on the revenue side there is a return to be completed and the Council ensures that it keeps within the relevant parameters of these rules.

Carbon reduction

Under Dublin City's Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024, it is committed to a 40% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and the goal of carbon neutrality. Dublin City has also signed up to the Cities Mission which is an EU funded programme that addresses clean mobility, energy efficiency and green urban planning, and offers the possibility to build joint initiatives and ramp up collaborations in synergies with other EU programmes.

Litter control

Ways of improving litter control in Dublin City were raised and it was highlighted that an extra million euros has been dedicated to litter control in the 2023 budget. Furthermore, thirty two additional general operatives have been hired to carry out extra street-cleaning in Dublin City and it was recognised how important this service is for pride in a local area and to show the work of the Council.

Rent collection

The Council believes that it needs to improve on its rent collection levels. Previously, it had not been evicting tenants who were failing to pay their rent though that a balanced approach also needs to be taken in this area. However, the Council is taking stricter measures on arrears and cases are being taken to court, which has been supportive of the Council's measures. Tenants understand that there are consequences to refusing to pay rent and noted that of arrears, 80% have a payment plan in place.

Conclusion

The Chair thanked the local authority officials for their attendance at the meeting and outlined that the minutes will be published on the NOAC website at a future date.

5

Stage 2 Presentation

Presentation to NOAC

NOAC Scrutiny Process Stage 2

Owen P Keegan,
Chief Executive, Dublin City Council

Wednesday, 11 January 2023

Introduction

Dublin is an international capital city and is the economic engine of the region and the State.

Dublin City Council seeks to enhance the city's attractiveness as a place in which to invest, to work, to live and to visit. It also seeks to take a leading role in shaping the future development of the city.

Political Governance Structure

Lord Mayor and 62 Councillors

Strategic Policy Committees

1. Arts, Culture, Leisure & Recreation
2. Economic Development & Enterprise
3. Climate Change, Environment & Energy
4. Finance
5. Housing
6. Planning and Urban Form
7. Traffic & Transportation

Local Community Development Committee

Audit Committee

5 Area Committees

Organisational Structure

|	Core Service Departments	Reporting to
1	Housing, & Community Services North & South City Area Management	Assistant Chief Executive
2	Environment & Transportation	Assistant Chief Executive
3	Planning & Property Development Culture, Recreation & Economic Services,	Assistant Chief Executive
4	Fire & Emergency Services	Chief Fire Officer
	Support Departments	
5	Finance & IT	Head of Finance
6	Transformation & Corporate Services Human Resources, Digital Services	Assistant Chief Executive
7	Legal Services	Law Agent

City Council Revenue Budget 2013

Revenue Budget 2023 €1,241m

Sources of Revenue Funding

Government Grants	€442m	35.6%
Rates	€381m	30.7%
Goods & Services	€349m	28.1%
LPT	€26m	2.1%
Net Credit Balance	€43m	3.5%
	€1,241m	100%

City Council Capital Programme 2023 to 2025
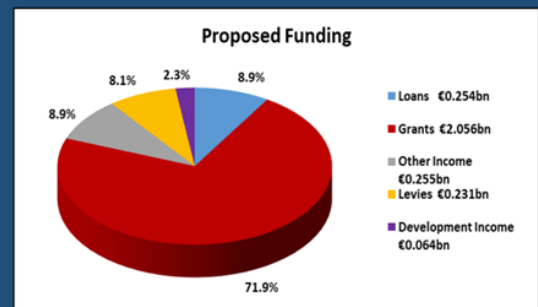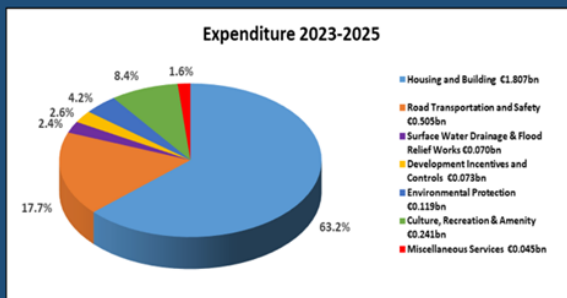
The City Council approved a Capital Programme for the three years 2023 to 2025 of €2.86bn. Housing accounts for €1.8bn or 63% of the Capital Programme. 72% of funding comes from State grants.

Employment at 31 December 2022

Permanent Employees

Senior Management	29
Clerical/admin	1,813
Professional/Technical	566
Outdoor	2,348
Firefighters	984
	5,740

Contract Posts

Temporary	23
Contract	188
	211

Total Employees	**5,951**

'Dublin City Council is a large organisation, with a wide range of technical/professional expertise. It has a very significant presence in the life of the city and it has a huge impact on the 'quality of life' of those who live in, work in or visit the city.'

	2008	2016	2022	Change 08 to 22	Change 08 to 16	Change 16 to 22
Total Employees	7,278	5,618	5,951	-1,327	-1,660	+333
				-18.2%	-22.8%	+5.9%

Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Key Challenges and Constraints

- **Delivery**   Housing – expanded social/affordable housing programme
  Non Housing Capital Programme
  Active Travel Measures
  Climate Action/Mitigation Measures

- **Recovery of City Centre post COVID Restrictions**

- **Area Redevelopment**

- **Promoting Innovation**

- **Digital Services/Transformation**

- **Hybrid/Blended Working**

Constraints
- *Recruitment*

- *Impact of Inflation*

Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Key Challenges – Housing Delivery

Summary of Unit Numbers in Pipeline	Units
Under Construction	972
Tender Stage	727
Part V	1,500 (Current Pipeline - 549)
Regeneration Projects	2,030
Advanced Planning and Design	1,110
Pre Planning or Feasibility Stage	2,488
Traveller Housing	71
Long Term Leasing	1,465 (Delivered 2022 – 367)
Affordable Purchase	1,802
Cost Rental	2,615
TOTAL	14,780

Constraints

- **Availability of Private Contractors**

- **DCC Staff Constraints**

- **Land – Need for major land acquisition programme**

Key Challenges – Recruitment

There are ongoing difficulties in recruiting for all positions and especially for construction related professions. finance and IT positions.

Successful candidates often have a number of employment offers under consideration at any one time. High job refusal rate.

The inability to negotiate on starting pay and to offer incremental credit for outside work experience is a major problem.

The application of uniform pay and conditions across the local authority sector, which do not take account of variations in the cost of living (e.g. housing, and travel costs), makes recruitment and retention of staff more difficult for the City Council,

Staff, particularly at entry-level grades, are leaving for similar but higher paid jobs in the private sector.

There is significant recruitment activity across the public sector and competition for employees.
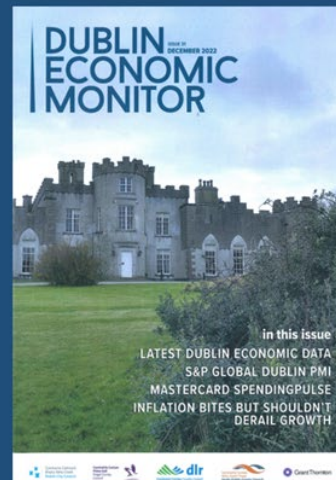
Key Challenges – Promoting Innovation

European Programme Support Office

Mission Cities

Our Smart City Unit
- Smart Dockland Project – test bed for new technologies *smartdocklands.ie*
- Telecoms Unit to Exploit Potential for Next Generation Mobile Connectivity 5G
- IoT & roll out of Sensors – lifebuoys, surface water drainage
- Google AirYiew - generating real time measurement of air quality
- *'Academy of the Near Future'* programme in partnership with Trinity College Dublin promoting use of technology to build better cities and services *nearfuture.ie*
- 'Procurement by Challenge'
- Dublin Economic Monitor

DUBLIN ECONOMIC MONITOR

in this issue
LATEST DUBLIN ECONOMIC DATA
S&P GLOBAL DUBLIN PMI
MASTERCARD SPENDINGPULSE
INFLATION BITES BUT SHOULDN'T DERAIL GROWTH

Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Key Challenges – Digital Service Transformation

Digital Services/Transformation 2022
Citizen Hub (live mid-Dec 2021) – 13,500 users, 25 live services, 26,500 service requests raised

New Digital Services - DCC Alerts, online customer appointments

Data & Analytics Unit established

CitiDesk – new staff communications platform, with over 400,000 hits in 2022

New Digital Services Planned for 2023
Councillor Portal

Citizen Engagement platform – 1st stage will be pilot for the LECP

Digitally enable our operational workforce

Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
An Coimisiúin Náisiúnra Maoirseachta & Iniúchoóireachta

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