



Cavan County Council Scrutiny Report

NOAC Report No. 56 – May 2023



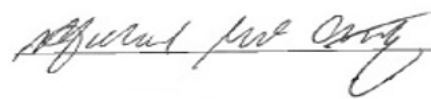
Chair's Opening remarks

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
22nd May 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 six [inc Wicklow] Stage 1 and two Stage 2 meetings held, with several more due to take place throughout the year.

Conclusion

The process has 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.

Cavan County Council had their Stage 1 meeting in June 2022 and their Stage 2 meeting in March 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 Cavan County Council:

- NOAC was pleased that Cavan had a very impressive 41% of its County classified as unpolluted or litter-free in 2020. The Council attributed this statistic to community work and engagement.
- NOAC was glad to learn that the Council has a long term strategy in place to deal with the significant volume of vacant housing stock.
- NOAC was interested in hearing about the regeneration works taking place in the Abbeylands, Cavan Town and Virginia, amongst other areas, which will enhance these locations for its citizens.



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NOAC Profile

Cavan County Council

April 2022

Updated in March 2023 with PI 2021 figures

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Cavan County Council General Information

Local authority	Cavan County Council
Population:	81,201 (census 2022)
Area:	1,932 sq km
Municipal Districts:	3 Municipal Districts
2023 Budget	€83,182,825
Number employed @ 31/12/2022	446 WTE 92 Part time fire fighters
WTE Staff per 1,000 population	5.49
% of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave	3.58%
Housing Information @ 31/12/22	
Local Authority Stock number	2,141
Number currently on waiting list	Total gross need: 1,023 Net housing need: 474 Transfers: 549
HAP Tenancies	395
Homeless presentations	121
Any specific housing issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Removal of eviction ban will provide a challenge to the homeless service and capital programme. ■ Limited supply of private housing. ■ Limited supply of private contractors and capacity pressures on key trades and professions. ■ Capacity issues with regard to Approved Housing Bodies.
Council Mission Statement	<p>Vision</p> <p>A progressive, vibrant county, which is smart, connected, innovative, inclusive and sustainable.</p> <p>Mission</p> <p>A Council that leads and collaborates with all to drive and shape a better future for our County.</p>
Economic Forum (CEF)	The Economic Forum provides strategic direction on economic development within the county and communication conducted via virtual means due to current government restrictions.
The Local Enterprise Office (LEO)	LEO Cavan aims to promote entrepreneurship, foster business start-ups, and develop existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide accessible, high quality supports for businesses in the County. The key overarching objectives of the LEO are to provide Business and Information Advisory Services, Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Support Services and Local Enterprise Development Services.

Retail Incentives	Rates remission policy for vacant commercial properties.
The Corporate Plan	<p data-bbox="576 219 1034 253">Our Corporate Plan 2019-2024</p> <p data-bbox="576 264 1406 499">Our Corporate Plan is a statement of our strategic priorities over the lifetime of this Council. This in turn will guide our Annual Service Plans and Team Development Plans and enable us to put in place the appropriate financial measures to meet these priorities. The plan outlines our strategic objectives, supporting strategies and key strategic actions. The actions included in this Corporate Plan are not an exhaustive list and may change, subject to funding.</p> <p data-bbox="576 521 1406 757">Our Corporate Plan aims to align all elements of activity and behaviour in our organisation to support our Purpose and Vision. The success of our plan is dependent on all our internal stakeholders working together to achieve our strategic objectives. This includes our Elected Council, Corporate Policy Group, Strategic Policy Committees, Municipal Districts, Senior Management Team and staff at all levels across the organisation.</p> <p data-bbox="576 801 847 835">Creating One View</p> <p data-bbox="576 846 1406 1126">The Corporate Plan provides an opportunity to bring alignment with other strategic plans so that there can be a single overall vision for the County and the organisation. It also provides a shared understanding of the key strategic goals we are pursuing in the short, medium and long term. This will allow our organisation to communicate more clearly with internal staff and external stakeholders about where we want to go and how we plan to get there, mainstreamed and integrated into all activities and delivery of functions and services across our administrative area.</p> <p data-bbox="576 1171 1102 1205">Our Strategic Objectives 2019-2024</p> <p data-bbox="576 1216 1406 1451">Cavan County Council will work continuously to deliver a high-quality service to our citizens. In order to achieve the Vision as set out in our Corporate Plan 2019-2024 we will focus on six key strategic objectives as set out below. To deliver on these, we will implement a range of supporting strategies and actions. These will be delivered across all departments and functions of the Council and will be further elaborated on by the Annual Service Delivery Plans.</p> <ol data-bbox="576 1473 1406 2094" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support and enhance local democracy and promote engagement and collaboration with our citizens. 2. Facilitate and promote sustainable economic growth, enterprise and tourism. 3. Promote the development of stronger towns and villages to enable them to act as key drivers of economic, social and community development across the County. 4. Strengthen our communities, to remove disadvantage and make them more resilient. 5. Foster a spirit of pride in our organisation and promote organisational effectiveness to ensure the optimum level of customer service while supporting our staff to reach their full potential. 6. Promote a greater understanding of climate change and ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed and integrated into all activities and delivery of functions and services across our administrative area.

<p>Shared services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ My Pay Staff Payroll managed by Laois Co. Co. ■ HAP - Managed by Limerick Co. Co. ■ North East Homeless Service - Managed by Louth Co. Co. ■ SupplyGov Procurement – Managed by Kerry Co. Co. ■ National Waste Collection Permit Office – Managed by Offaly Co Co. ■ CUWERLA Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities – Managed by Leitrim and Donegal Co County Council. ■ Eastern Midland CARO – Kildare Co. Co. lead authority.
<p>Regional Issues including new developments and initiatives</p>	<p>Key regional priorities in the North East Region are to positively influence enterprise and job creation, drive a higher level of economic success by building on the region’s strengths and building the attractiveness of the region as a location to work and live.</p> <p>Cavan County Council supports and contributes to the economic development of the North East Region through a number of key projects. These are funded under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund, Rural Regeneration Development Fund and Urban Regeneration which underpins and supports our strategic priorities for town and village revitalisation, building a strong tourism proposition, and the development of the region’s digital economy including the remote working agenda into the future.</p>
<p>Supporting Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cavan County Council LECP Strategy ■ Cavan County Council County Development Plan ■ Cavan County Council Food Strategy ■ Cavan County Council Tourism Strategy ■ Cavan County Council Angling Strategy ■ Cavan County Council Diaspora Strategy ■ Cavan County Council Culture and Creative Strategy 2023 -2027 ■ Cavan Library Strategy

Collection Rates

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Rate collection rates	76.00%	76.00%	79.00%	83.00%	79.00%	83.00%	82.00%	70.00%
Rent collection rates	81.00%	82.00%	85.00%	84.00%	84.00%	84.00%	84.00%	83.00%
Housing loan collection rates	91.00%	84.00%	81.00%	77.00%	74.00%	77.00%	73.00%	67.00%

From records, it is clear that there have been improvements in rate collections over the years. Rate collections have gone from 70% in 2014 to 76% in 2021. However, rates collection have dropped significantly from 2018 to 2021, where it now stands at 76%, which is below the national average across all local authorities of 83.4%.

Rent collection rates have remained steady over the years, at 83% in 2014 and at 81% in 2020. This is a low collection level when compared to the average collection rate of 88.8% in 2021 across all local authorities.

The collection rate for housing loans has improved steadily over the years. It was at a low of 67% in 2014 but is now at 91% in 2021, which is considerably higher than the 81.6% average of all other local authorities.

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.

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.

Cavan County Council is alluded to specifically in the section of the report outlined below:

- Under the heading of consultation for the Corporate Plan, the report quotes Cavan's Corporate Plan in stating that "in preparing the Corporate Plan 2019-2024 submissions were sought from internal and external stakeholders including the Council's Elected Members, CPG [Corporate Policy Groups], Council Staff, members of Council committees including the LCDC and JPC as well as the PPN." The report points out that this is an example of a consultation programme with multiple streams and one that was very successfully thought out and delivered. Cavan County Council used SurveyMonkey to garner responses from interested parties during the consultation process.

Performance Indicator Reports

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 Cavan County Council are outlined in the points below.

NOAC REPORT NO 44

Performance Indicator Report 2020 – September 2021

- **Housing.** Cavan County Council owned 2,099 social housing dwellings at the end of 2021 with 4.67% vacant. The average time for rehousing in vacant properties was 55.27 weeks, the fourth highest amongst all local authorities and which compares very unfavourably with the national average of 34.44 weeks. Though varying greatly, Cavan has had long vacancy periods in recent years (61.82 weeks in 2020, 37.38 weeks in 2019, 71.39 weeks in 2018 and 50.92 weeks in 2017).

Cavan was one of only three local authorities to record no long-term homeless adults in emergency accommodation at the end of 2021.
- **New House building inspections** have generally remained steady over the years, at 16.34% in 2014 and similarly at 15.43% in 2021. This compares to 27.35% across the local authority sector in 2021.
- **Cost per capita of the planning service** was €23.15 in 2021, compared to €16.02 in 2014. Across all local authorities the figure for 2021 was €33.37.
- **Environment.** 40% of the County was unpolluted or litter-free in 2021, which compares with a median of 22% across all local authorities.
- **Brown bins.** 45% of households within the local authority area are covered by a licensed operator providing a 3 bin service. This is the lowest figure across all local authorities and compares unfavourably to the average of 89.36%.
- **Green Flag status.** At the end of 2021, 26% of schools in the county held a Green Flag, which compares to the national average of 34.80%.
- **Fire service.** It took an average of 6:14 minutes to mobilise part time fire brigades for calls to fires and 7:12 minutes for other non-fire emergencies. The median across all local authorities was 5:19 minutes and 5:32 minutes respectively.
- **Libraries.** There was an average of 0.41 visits per head of population and 88,912 items issued to library borrowers in 2021. Library visits were significantly lower than 2019 (2.4 visits) and 2020 (0.68 visits) due to the Covid restrictions.
- **Staff total.** Whole-time equivalent staff employed by Cavan County Council at the end of 2020 was 394.10. The mean within the local authority sector was 973.36. In 2014, Cavan employed 360.55 whole-time equivalent staff.
- **Sick leave.** Cavan County Council's medically certified sick leave rate is 2.01%, with the national average 2.89%. Cavan County Council's self-certified sick leave was 0.13%. The national average is 0.20%. In 2014 Cavan's certified sick leave rate was 2.96% and its self-certified paid sick leave was 0.18%.
- **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 Cavan County Council's websites in 2021 was 8.08, which compares to an average of 13.60 across all local authorities. The per capita total number of followers at the end of 2021 of its social media accounts was 1.38, as opposed to an average of 0.93 across all local authorities.
- **Local Enterprise Offices.** Cavan showed the highest increase in the number of jobs created, recording 182.47 jobs per 100,000 population created with assistance from the LEO in 2021, compared with 128 job losses in 2020.

NOAC REPORT NO 24

Customer Satisfaction Survey – September 2020

- In 2019, 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 third survey, completed in 2020, surveyed the 10 smallest local authorities, including Cavan County Council.
- 59% of respondents were satisfied with Cavan County Council, the same as the average level of satisfaction with Councils.
- 30% of people felt that Cavan County Council provides good value for money, just over the average of 29% for all Councils.
- 47% of people believe that Cavan County Council is doing a good job, compared to the overall satisfaction rating of 55%.

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 two years. Cavan was one of the fourteen which had not carried out an assessment.
- The Head of Internal Audit reports to the Chief Executive (CE) and Director of Finance in seven authorities, including Cavan.

NOAC REPORT NO 12

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

New Management Systems and Structures

Local authorities all reported a very active management process for managing the duration of vacancies or voids. It was of note how many had recently put in place new systems or management structures to deal with this issue. An example of the management structure is that Cavan County Council has close liaison between Housing Construction and Housing Allocations.

Number of housing estates managed by local authority

Cavan County Council manages 68 housing estates in its area, which is one of the lowest numbers amongst all local authorities.

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	2,356	3,321
% Units inspected	34.3	3.58
Inspected Failed %	1	100

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



CAVAN COUNTY

Performance Indicators	2021		2020		2019		2018		2017		2016		2015		2014	
	Data	Median/Average	Data	Median/Average	Data	Median/Average	Data	Median/Average	Data	Median/Average	Data	Median/Average	Data	Median/Average	Data	Median/Average
H1 Social Housing provided in year per 1,000 population	0.29	0.59	0.30	0.64	0.72	1.15	0.56	0.84	0.24	0.53	n/a	3.43	1.41	1.91	1.39	0.80
H2 % of directly provided dwellings vacant at 31/12	4.67	3.16	6.06	3.18	6.41	3.15	4.48	2.77	3.27	2.73	4.43	3.02	4.43	3.5	5.85	3.8
H3a Average time from vacation date to P1 year re-letting date (weeks)	55.27	34.44	61.82	32.69	37.38	28.17	71.39	27.75	50.92	28.9	57.38	32.99	56.00	28.43	38.24	31.43
H3b Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	€17,298.30	€19,653.39	€16,249.13	€19,065.30	€13,513.39	€18,336.85	€15,945.27	€18,590.28	€13,813.23	€17,160.60	10,221.82	€15,877	6,846.52	€13,378.40	1,266.57	€11,534.91
H4 Average repair and maintenance cost per unit	€573.20	€1,150.13	€356.62	€1,119.82	€376.69	€1,168.99	€523.68	€841.83	€478.19	€1,311.82	1,034.87	€1,500.23	1,046.13	€1,292.57	343.14	€1,272.30
H5 Inspections (Dwellings inspected in 2016) carried out in year as % of registrations	No data available	No data available	3.58	6.73	10.56	9.93	20.21	7.39	16.30	4.96	23.20	4.36	23.37	5.64	34.30	6.51
R1a % Regional Road KM that ever received a PSCI rating	86	91	93.8	77	98.2	99	100	99.36	97	96	98.00	99	82.00	68	100.00	47.9
R1b % Total Regional Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	34.77	30.90	24.4	31.19	26.06	38.28	31	37.58	13	28	19.00	30	11.00	20	17.00	11.15
R1c % Total Primary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	23.87	26.05	18.3	24.00	14.92	23.08	12	23.39	8	20	10.00	13	5.00	11	8.00	6.4
R1d % Total Secondary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	18.79	21.40	14.8	17.66	10.17	17.67	6	15.19	9	14	5.00	10	3.00	8	3.00	4.61
R1e % Total Tertiary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	11.71	15.38	8.8	13.93	7.81	14.23	7	12.42	5	8	3.00	7	2.00	5	1.00	3.63
R2a KM Regional Road strengthened using road improvement grants	17.5	13.40	13.2	14.7	10.2	13.17	13.3	13.4	10.30	10.3	10.80	10.8	12.40	10.2		

Performance Indicators	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014						
R2b KM Regional road resealed using road maintenance grants	28.6	13.8	19.4	14.27	15.3	12.70	11.9	13.90	8.3	8.20	12.2	56.6	49.57	54.7
R2/3 % Motor tax transactions performed online	86.72	83.61	81.52	70.21	69.15	67.39	64.05	98.95	99.07	98.95	97.77	34.87	3.64	31.66
W1 % private schemes with water quality in compliance	No data available	No data available	No data available	97.50	97.1	98.36	98.46	98.39	99.07	98.95	97.77	34.87	3.64	31.66
E1 % households availing of a 3-bin service	45	37.59	89.73	48.36	43.91	6.37	39.53	5.49	34.87	4.19	37.7	8.49	2.00	9.5
E2 Pollution cases on hand at year end as % of the cases that arose that year	17.16	13.67	10.38	9.28	11.00	16.73	9.79	5.39	8.49	26.73	9.91	24	34.30	17.71
E3 % area unpolluted or litter free	40	41	22	15.00	19.00	6	10	1.00	14	0.00	13	14	2.00	9.5
P1 New buildings inspected as % of new buildings notified	15.43	8.89	15.28	23.90	16.75	25.89	17	25.74	24	20.45	19.42	24	34.30	17.71
P2 % of determinations that confirmed the decision made by LA	59.26	57.14	73.13	73.07	75.92	78.57	79	42.86	71.88	83.33	77.78	71.88	25.00	71.7
P3 Ratio of planning cases being investigated at year end as to cases closed	10.62	11.96	3.74	2.74	3.03	4.02	2.41	1.42	2.61	2.08	2.87	2.61	1.39	2.88
P4 Cost per capita of the Planning Service	€23.15	19.77	31.47	€30.27	29.24	€16.59	28.31	15.25	€26.96	13.84	€26.96	16.02	16.02	€25.27
F1 Cost per capita of Fire Service (based on 2011 Census for 2014 and 2015)	€57.32	47.73	79.93	€60.79	53.85	€53.72	57.74	57.28	€57.88	54.33	€56.07	53.47	53.47	€55.9
F2 Average time to mobilise Brigade re Fire (Minutes) (FT)	N/A	N/A	1:28	1:24	1:42	N/A	1:45	n/a	1.6	N/A	1.5	1.6	N/A	1.66

Performance Indicators	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
F3 % of Fire Cases in which first attendance is within 10 minutes	33.77	24.28	29.68	27.62	26.92	32.20	27.23	32.54	58.6
L1a No. of Library visits per head of population	0.41	0.68	2.40	2.39	2.35	2.41	2.90	3.30	3.71
L1b No. of Items borrowed per head of population	1.17	1.15	1.52	1.41	1.27	1.65	2.02	3.82	
L2 Cost of Library Service per capita	€36.09	32.76	27.37	26.71	25.84	26.01	23.64	24.27	€29.41
Y1 % of local schools involved in Comhairle na nOg Scheme	90.91	100	100	100	90.91	90.91	100.00	7.63	51.86
C1 WTE staff per 1,000 population	5.17	5.21	5.17	5.03	5.12	4.89	4.95	4.93	5.63
C2a % of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave in year	2.01	2.26	3.35	3.74	3.35	3.38	2.40	2.96	3.34
C2b % of paid working days lost to self-certified sick leave in year	0.13	0.14	0.21	0.20	0.23	0.23	0.19	0.18	0.4
C3 LA website page views per 1,000 population	N/A	N/A	10,274.65	12,146.08	11,299	12,326.03	11,790.72	4,737.86	9,651
C4 Overall cost of ICT Provision per WTE	€2,779.69	€2,769.73	€2,803.14	2,144.98	€2,544.31	2,813.10	2,458.09	2,660.53	€2,646.8
M2a % Commercial Rates Collected in year	76	76	79	83.00	79.0	83.00	82.00	70.00	77
M2b % Rent & Annuities Collected in year	81	82	85	84.00	84.0	84.00	84.00	83.00	84
M2c % Housing Loans Collected in year	91	84	81	77.00	74.0	77.00	73.00	67.00	67
J1 LEO jobs output per 1,000 population	2.39	-1.69	1.33	1.92	1.14	1.23	1.41	1.41	0.73



Stage 1 Minutes

Final NOAC Stage 1 Scrutiny Meeting Cavan County Council

Date:	23rd June 2022, WebEx online meeting	
In attendance:	Cavan County Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive ■ Brendan Jennings, Director of Services, Planning, Community & Economic Development ■ Eoin Doyle, Director of Services, Housing, Libraries & Cultural Services, Human Resources & Corporate Services ■ Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services, Transportation, Environment and Water Services ■ Margaret McNally, A/Head of Finance, ICT and Emergency Services 	NOAC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Michael McCarthy, Chair NOAC ■ Alan McDermott, NOAC Executive ■ John Goldrick, NOAC Executive

NOAC's profile for Cavan County 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 Cavan County Council and the NOAC Board will take place. The NOAC Chair invited the Chief Executive (CE) to give an overview of the Council and the issues facing it. Matters discussed in detail were:

- **Council overview.**

The Council's mission statement is contained within the profile and explains that it wishes to provide a better future for the County. The mission statement provides the Council with direction and time is invested with staff to ensure their inclusion in that mission. Prior to Covid, an organisational programme was put in place, which linked every role in the Council with its vision and strategy. This is contained within the corporate plan and allows staff to feel part of the vision for the County. While Covid had interrupted the plan, it will be recommenced in the coming months.

■ Organisation structure.

The Council's structure is similar to other local authorities and has four directorates with ten to eleven departments. The collaboration between those departments and also between the elected members is strong. It was noted that the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) carried out a governance review of the Council which was, overall, positive. It made approximately thirty recommendations, which are being implemented. The Council is ensuring that it has appropriate internal review and risk management mechanisms in place and it has strengthened its procurement, audit and risk register areas.

■ Performance Indicators.

Achievements are reviewed annually under the Performance Indicators and this information is forwarded to elected members and the Corporate Policy Group. There are challenges on some Performance Indicators which are below the national average such as brown bins and housing voids. Issues can exist with some statistics, such as a relatively small number of staff absences skewing an overall high level of attendance rate of employees. On the positive side, the Council's overall costs are lower than that of many other local authorities.

■ Challenges.

Finance is the main challenge at present, and funding under the Local Government Fund has remained static since 2014. Given that a solid income base is necessary, the local property tax has been increased by 15%, along with increases in the rates charges over recent years. This ensures that the Council's income can keep in pace with inflation and the finances are in a good position. It was noted that Cavan ensures that it does not spend beyond its means.

The Council has adopted its County development plan, which struck a good balance with the demands of competing sectors and important issues such as the zoning of lands, which was dealt with within the document. There are resourcing issues in dealing with the approximately fourteen different government departments which provide funding to the Council. Town regeneration accounts for a major part of development with delivery of housing being a challenge as well as an increased role for climate change.

■ Topical issues.

Currently, the draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 is being completed, which is of relevance to Cavan. There has been an issue with the funding of local roads, with a legacy issue of maintenance spanning twenty five years. There could also be a negative financial impact regarding Irish Water, which the Council hopes the national government would assist with if losses occur.

In terms of the digital area and connectivity, Cavan is performing well. There is a successful digital hub in Cavan town and the Council works closely with national broadband Ireland in this area. The Council aims to provide a high quality of life for its citizens, while supporting business and communities. The Council also avails of national funding to ensure that it makes Cavan a positive place to live.

■ Current affairs.

Cavan County Council was among the local authorities highlighted in the RTÉ Investigates: Council Chamber Secrets programme. Matters alluded to in that programme related to historical governance related procedures.

■ Council make-up.

The elected members are broken down as follows: seven Fianna Fáil, seven Fine Gael, two Independents, one Sinn Féin and one Aontú member. NOAC noted that members had collaborated constructively together, given the financial measures that were agreed upon. Two years ago, an increase was implemented on the Local Property Tax charges, as well as rates charges. Given the phasing out of the Non Principal Private Residence (NPPR) charge, the above mentioned measures needed to be introduced to increase revenue. This was particularly important, since an income generating landfill is coming towards the end of its lifecycle and that source of income needs to be replaced.

■ Housing.

The rehousing of vacant properties stood at an average of 61.82 weeks in 2020, which was high compared to the national average. The Council has over 2,300 social housing units, which is much higher than other similar local authorities. Minor works are carried out by Council staff, while around 92% of the work is undertaken by private contractors from the local area. The Council traditionally used the sale of housing stock as a capital injection for its budget. However, in 2018 and 2019, those sales dropped and so the Council did not have the resources to fix housing stock.

The position was that more old stock was becoming vacant faster than it could be repaired. That position has since been ameliorated, with the Council repairing 70 – 80 houses per year, which is greater than the numbers that are becoming vacant. The process of getting back on track with vacancies is a four to five year programme and the Council is halfway through that programme at present. Currently, these figures are skewing its statistics on this Performance Indicator though it is felt that this programme is working successfully.

■ Commercial rates.

Collections in this area have improved over the last years and have been at over 80%. The Council has worked closely with businesses and, where required, payment plans have been put in place and a reminder system has been created in order to encourage timely payment. It was noted that there was a small drop in payments due to waivers which were in place due to Covid. In 2020, €5 million was collected. It was highlighted that all of the aforementioned measures have improved collection rates.

■ Environment.

It was noted that Cavan had a very impressive 41% of its County classified as unpolluted or litter-free in 2020. The Council attributed this statistic to community work and engagement. In particular, the Council has put resources into the enforcement side of the environment area and noted litter wardens being allocated to particular districts. Cavan advised that enforcement is one part of the solution and a further focus needs to be put on education. It highlighted that the Green Flag results could be improved upon and this will be the next area it will look at.

■ Technology and social media.

Cavan has a very high level of social media account followers and has around eight or nine separate social media accounts. This has been attributed to the fact that the Council has an excellent communications officer, along with a positive Communications Strategy in place. The Council posts most of its activities on these social media accounts and its various social media accounts are interlinked.

The NOAC Chair thanked the CE for the comprehensive discussion and invited Cavan County Council to attend a Stage 2 meeting with the Board, at a later date.

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



3

Stage 2 Minutes

Final Minutes of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Meeting with Cavan County Council

Date:	Wednesday 29th March 2023 at 10:30 a.m. Stage 2 Scrutiny Meeting	
Venue:	Custom House, Dublin 1	
Attended by:	<p>Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Michael McCarthy, NOAC Chair <p>Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Niall Quinn ■ Declan Breathnach ■ Ciarán Hayes ■ Noel Harrington <p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fiona Quinn ■ Margaret Lane ■ Brian Cawley <p>Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Alan McDermott ■ John Goldrick 	<p>By Invite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive ■ Eoin Doyle, Director of Services, Housing, Libraries & Cultural Services, Human Resources & Corporate Services ■ Brendan Jennings, Director of Services, Planning, Community & Economic Development ■ Paddy Connaughton, Director of Services, Transportation, Environment and Water Services ■ Margaret McNally A/Head of Finance, ICT and Emergency Services

Meeting with Cavan County Council

The NOAC Chair welcomed the Chief Executive (CE) and his team to the meeting. The Cavan and NOAC teams introduced themselves and following that, the Cavan CE gave an overview of Cavan County Council.

Overview

Cavan shares a major boundary with Fermanagh, and due to this fact, has a memorandum of understanding with this authority as well as a strong ongoing relationship. Cavan's population is 81,201 as per the CSO figures in 2022, which represents a 6.6% growth on the previous census. 19% of the population is non-Irish, which is a significant proportion. Manufacturing, construction and agriculture play an important role in the local economy though professional services, trade, IT and food are significant growth areas. However, the population has a lower than average disposable income per head, with sixteen electoral divisions having cases of extreme disadvantage statics within them.

Corporate objectives

The Council's current Corporate Plan was adopted in 2019. It seeks to promote sustainable economic growth, along with promoting the development of stronger towns and villages, while removing economic and social disadvantage among them. It also strives to ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed and integrated into everything that it does as a Council.

The Council's relationship with government departments is more complex than in the past. Whereas it principally had dealt with one lead department, now it needs to deal with multiple departments to carry out its functions, with all the extra administration that this entails.

Revenue

Expenditure has increased from over €62 million in 2017 to a high of over €93 million in 2020, before dropping back to €84 million in 2021. Over the last number of years the Local Property Tax has been increased by 15% and it was noted that commercial rates had increased by 10% in 2022. It was highlighted that State grants were high in 2020, due to Covid, with the rates waiver scheme forming a significant portion of the Council's income during that period. Cavan also noted that it had made improvements in its governance in recent times and highlighted that it expects its expenditure to increase in the coming years.

Transport

Cavan is completely dependent on its roads network and is one of three counties with no rail lines. Of significant projects, Cavan County Council, in partnership with Meath County Council and in association with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, is progressing the development of the N3 Virginia Bypass scheme. This project is currently approaching the end of Phase two and is considered to be a vital project, as it will relieve the traffic jams which are currently within Virginia. Cavan highlighted the N3 as a critical link to Dublin and that it needs to comply with climate issues. Other major transport projects include the N55 Ballinagh traffic relief scheme and the N55 works from Corduff to the south of Killydoon.

Greenways

There is a proposal for a 40 kilometre long, Cavan Greenway, which will connect the towns of Cavan, Ballyconnell, Belturbet, and Clones. It will form part of a regionally significant greenway that will provide linkages with other proposed greenways in the Cavan/Monaghan/Leitrim region. There is a further proposal, currently at development stage, for a greenway from Lough Neagh to Leitrim.

Environment

The Council is required to prepare a climate action plan by March 2024. Cavan is the lead authority in the region for energy retrofitting of public buildings and has a Memorandum of Understanding with Leitrim and Monaghan. Additionally, Cavan is in the process of replacing its public lighting to LED which provides significant benefits from a climate perspective. Cavan is the lead authority in the region for energy retrofitting of public buildings and has a Memorandum of Understanding with Leitrim and Monaghan.

There is a major project underway for the Cavan Town Flood Relief Scheme. This is currently at stage one of the process with the objective of the scheme to alleviate the risk of flooding in the Cavan Town area.

Town regeneration

A large match-fund project (€24m) is being undertaken in regenerating the Abbeylands area of Cavan Town. The Council has acquired significant amounts of property in this area and as part of the proposal intends to include all of the social and community services in one place in the town. A new multi-functional public plaza and event space will be created, along with new pedestrian links to adjoining streets while also ensuring the conservation of protected structures. Cavan Town Hall has also been renovated and is now a theatre and arts space for exhibitions.

A further town regeneration scheme is underway in Virginia where a modern civic, cultural and library services centre is being developed which has 75% funding from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Regeneration schemes are also underway in Kingscourt and Ballyjamesduff.

Tourism

A project is being designed at the Shannon Pot Discovery Centre, which is to be linked with the Cavan Burren Park. Several walks will be created along with a centre looking at the impact of the Shannon and its source. This project is hoped to be a draw for visitors along with the Marble Arch Caves and Stairway to Heaven walk which are located in Fermanagh and already provide a significant draw in the region.

Sports

The GAA is developing its centre of excellence at Breffni Park and the Council will also submit an application for funding for a regional sports campus at this site. There will be room for an athletics track, Gaelic, soccer and rugby pitches, amongst other amenities.

Housing

The Council has a significant housing capital scheme, with 43 units being developed in Bailieborough as well as new units and regeneration of derelict houses in Butlersbridge, Ballinagh, Belturbet and St. Brigid's Terrace, Cavan. Vacant housing units are an issue for the Council, though it has been reducing those numbers. Since 2018, 283 units have been returned to use. Cavan have projected further progress in this area with a reduction from 71 vacant homes in February 2023 to 50 units by the end of 2023.

Economic development

The Council highlighted a number of economic development solutions for the county such as the Cavan Digital Hub (with over 100 jobs) being created under the Council's Digital Strategy which aims to develop technology-based start-ups and digital entrepreneurs.

Another important development is the Cootehill Enterprise Park, which accommodates established industries and newly created businesses. These businesses have created significant employment in the area. The Council assists entrepreneurs looking for sites and provides the services they need.

Cavan also has the Business and Technology Park, with direct access to the N3, a national primary route that connects Cavan to Dublin. The Business Park has a services infrastructure to suit the needs of both manufacturing and international services sectors and its close proximity of the site to Dublin Airport (50 minutes by car) is an attractive selling point.

Challenges Ahead

- Cavan's capital programme will require substantial funding and staffing to meet its goals.
- The shortage of housing units has negative knock-on effects for social and economic development. In addition, there has been a rise in construction costs, coupled with energy inflation, along with a limited supply of contractors.
- Climate change creates ongoing challenges for the Council.
- The ongoing Ukrainian situation necessitates a continued response from the Council.

Housing vacancies

The rehousing of vacant properties stood at an average of 55.27 weeks in 2021, compared to the national average of 34.44 weeks.

In 2018/19 the Council had a historically low spend on housing and it noted that it didn't have sufficient resources to renovate housing stock which was being returned to the Council in 2019. That year 60 houses were returned with only 29 being re-housed.

Since that period the Council has increased its differential rent and lobbied the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for additional funding. This has assisted it in reducing its vacant stock down to 50 units, which is expected to drop to 30 units in 2024.

The legacy stock on hand is a challenge for the Council and this will take a few more years to address. The Council manages to turn around stock which it receives back in approximately ten weeks and also highlighted that it has tenants ready to move into the units as soon as they become available. Most of this work is completed by private contractors, who are working to full capacity.

Hotels and Tourism dwell time

The impact of the use of hotels for accommodating refugees was discussed and it was noted that the vast majority of that accommodation is provided by smaller hotels. In particular, only one of the four major hotels in Cavan has accommodated any people coming from Ukraine. This means that there are still sufficient bed nights available for tourists, ensuring that the local economy can continue to thrive. The Council has a strong tourism base and has a tourism network up and running for a number of years. The Council noted that tourist stays in Cavan average about two days and it is looking to increase this level of visit. In particular, tourism visits occur in terms of the region rather than the county and the region has a number of attractions such as the Marble Arch Caves and the Stairway to Heaven in Fermanagh while one of Cavan's main attractions is the Shannon Pot Discovery Centre and Cavan Burren Park.

Council funding

The Council has acquired a lot of property over recent years, spending several million euros on land. It currently has a credit reserve in its accounts. In particular, the Cavan Museum and two theatres cost in the region of 800 to 900 thousand euros per annum to run and while they do generate some revenue, require around 200 thousand euros of a subsidy. This investment is very worthwhile as these venues ensure that the area is a better place to live for people in Cavan.

Education

Within the area there is the Cavan Institute, which Cavan hopes to upgrade in the future, as well as Ballyhaise College. Cavan is also around a forty minute journey from third level education.

Rates and inspection levels

Over the last few years the Council achieved increases in its commercial rates and the Local Property Tax, which required consensus among the Council members. Despite this level of consensus, members are generally very willing to scrutinise the work of the Council.

In terms of housing inspections, there was a high rate of inspections completed on housing units pre-Covid. It was noted that Covid effected this and the figures should return to that level in the next few years. With regards the failure rate, this is very high and the Council noted the thoroughness of its inspections.

Staff Recruitment

Cavan highlighted that recruitment is proving problematic and noted that some government funded initiatives provide for recruitment of staff on twelve-month contracts, though this isn't a successful method of attracting staff. It was also highlighted that it is taking approximately six months to replace staff from when a vacancy arises, and sometimes longer if there are any issues in the recruitment process.

Public realm works

It was noted by the Council that public realm works have largely been welcomed by the local population, but there have, at times, been some resistance. For instance, Kingscourt is part of the Active Travel Scheme and, as part of this, a cycle lane has been installed on the road. Some people were unhappy with this due to loss of car parking spaces. The Council highlighted that some compromises need to be made on public realm works which brought the community on board but sometimes it is necessary to stand over the plans after agreement has been reached.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The Council felt that its results were average within the 2020 Customer Satisfaction Survey. It believed that many people were unaware of all the services which it provides so it has tried to showcase its positive work through the use of press officers and social media.

Cavan is aware that one of its issues it faces is a lack of office accommodation. It noted that it is difficult to consult privately with customers in these offices, particularly when it has three separate buildings in the town. However, the Council is looking to upgrade and consolidate its offices as a single premises to support the concept of promoting the town centre.

Conclusion

The NOAC Chair thanked the Cavan Chief Executive coming in to meet with NOAC and for providing valuable insight into its work. The minutes of the meeting will be published on the NOAC website at a future date.


The meeting was brought to a close

4

Stage 1 Presentation

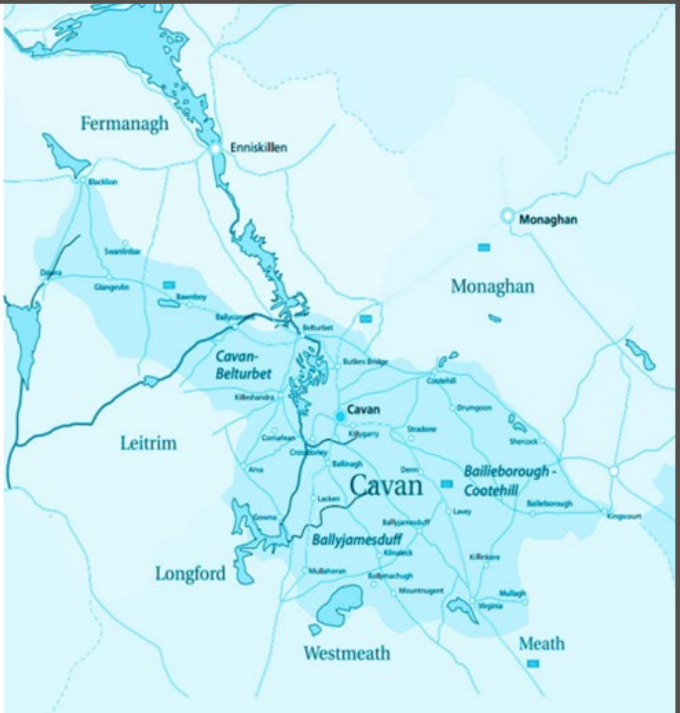
Cavan County Council

Presentation to NOAC Wednesday 29th March 2023




Cavan
Comhairle Contae an Chabháin
Cavan County Council

Mr Tommy Ryan
Chief Executive



Overview

- Welcome
- Profile of the County
- Corporate Vision and Objectives
- Revenue and Capital Programme
- Strategic Investment Programme
- Challenges for the future
- Conclusion

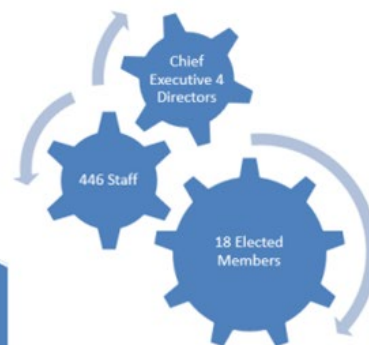



Profile the County

- Population 81,201 (CSO 2022). Increase of 6.6 % relative to previous census.
- Bordering Counties Leitrim, Longford, Monaghan, Meath, Westmeath and Fermanagh.
- County Cavan is located on the main N3 Primary National Route Dublin- Donegal road and is a central route between Dublin, Belfast, Donegal, Galway and Sligo. Cavan is located within 2 hours of Ferry Port and International Airport. 1.6m population catchment within a 60 minute drive.
- Traditionally strong manufacturing, construction and agricultural background (11% population engaged).
- Professional services, commerce trade, food and IT are now significant growth areas.
- Strong accommodation base for Tourism. 14 hotels with combined hotel room capacity of 844 rooms.
- 19% of population are of non- Irish nationality. Over 9,000 people speak foreign languages at home.
- Lower than average disposable income per head of population.
- Pobal deprivation Index indicates 16 electoral divisions which have extreme disadvantage statics .

Our Vision

A progressive vibrant county which is smart, connected, innovative, inclusive and sustainable.



Mission
A Council that leads and collaborates with all to drive and shape a better future for our County

Corporate Objectives

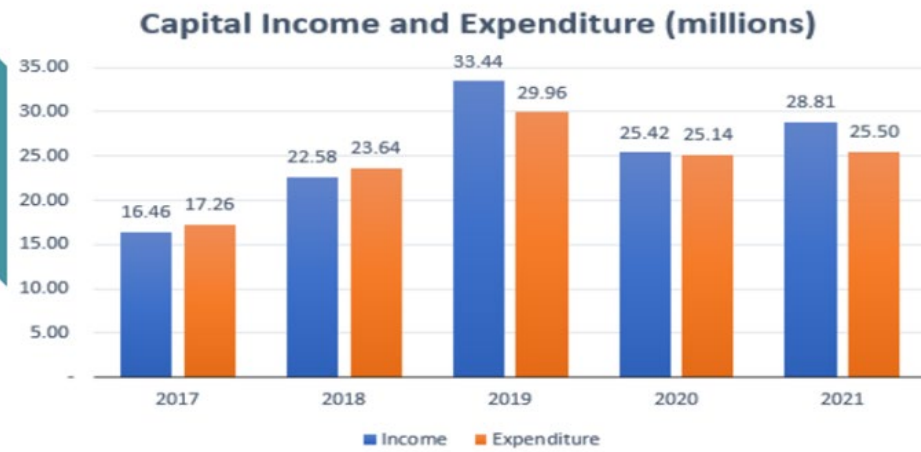
1. **Support and enhance local democracy** and promote engagement and collaboration with our citizens.
2. Facilitate and promote **sustainable economic growth**, enterprise and tourism.
3. Promote the development of **stronger towns and villages** to enable them act as key drivers of economic, social and community development across the county.
4. **Strengthen our communities**, to remove disadvantage and make them more resilient.
5. Foster a spirit of pride in our organisation and promote **organisational effectiveness** to ensure the optimum level of customer service while supporting our staff to reach their full potential.
6. Promote a greater understanding of **Climate Change** and ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed and integrated into all activities and delivery of functions and services across our administrative area

Revenue Expenditure



- Local Property Tax Adjustment Factor has been increased by maximum 15%.
- Commercial rates increased by 10% in 2022.
- Strong financial management and control
- But**
- Equalisation fund remains static.
- Limited rates buoyancy.

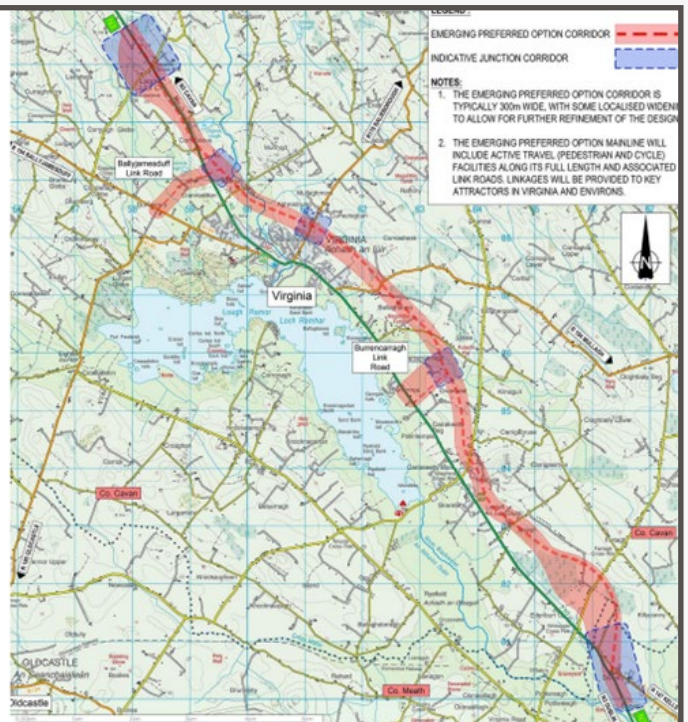
Capital Income and Expenditure (millions)



Capital Investment Programme : Transport

N3 Virginia Bypass

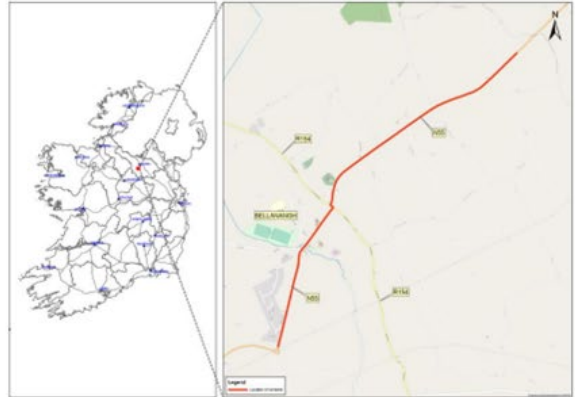
- Cavan is wholly dependant on roads network. One of three counties with no rail lines.
- Strategic Priority of the National Planning Framework.
- Will improve connectivity to Sligo, Enniskillen and Belfast.
- 14.5km in length
- Active Travel facilities proposed along the entire length of the scheme.
- Emerging Preferred Option (dwg. opposite) was identified and advertised at Public Consultation No 3 in Aug./Sept. 2021.



Capital Investment Programme: Transport

N55 Ballinagh Traffic Relief Scheme

- Regional significance, improve access Cavan – Athlone Route.
- The Strategic Assessment Report was completed in February 2023
- Cavan County Council to procure Engineering Consultancy Services for the management and delivery of Phases 1-4 of the TfI's Project Management Guidelines



N55 Corduff to South of Killydoon.

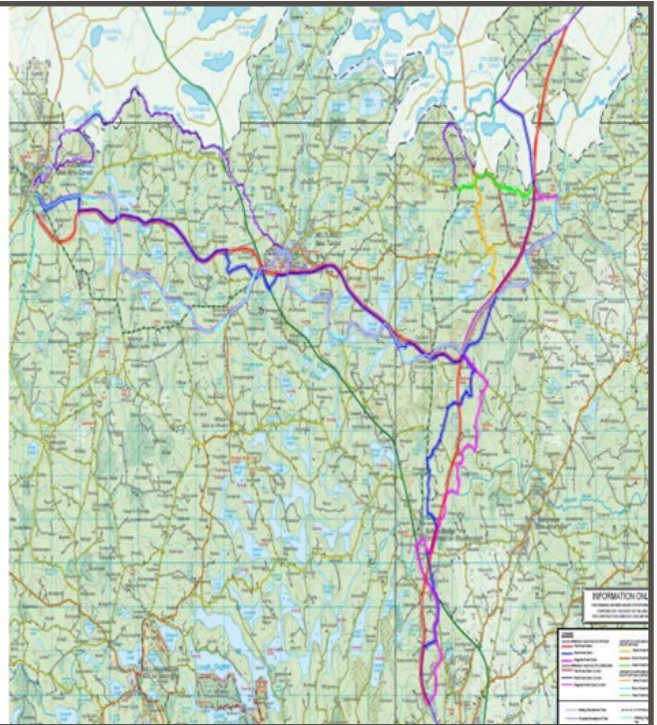
- Works commenced Jan 2023
- 24 Month Contract
- €33 million



Capital Investment Programme: Transport: Active Travel

Cavan Greenway

- The Cavan Greenway will link up with other proposed Greenways that will traverse Counties, Armagh, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Leitrim and Cavan.
- Direct link from the proposed Cavan Greenway leading to Castlesaunderson
- 40km.
- The Estimated Costs of the proposed project >€20M.

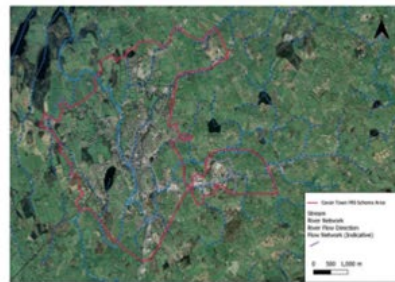


Capital Investment Programme Climate Change

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Stage 1 Option Assessment, Scheme Development and Design	█	█	█	█							
Stage 2 Planning / Development Consent				█	█						
Stage 3 Detailed Construction Design and Tender					█	█	█				
Stage 4 Construction Supervision						█	█	█	█		
Stage 5 Handover of Works									█	█	█

Cavan Town Flood Relief Scheme

- The project comprises of five stages, Stage 1 of which (Option's Assessment, Scheme Development and Design) is currently being undertaken.



Cavan Town Flooding - October 2022



Energy Retrofit Public Buildings

- €10 m investment – Cavan Lead Authority

Capital Investment: Town Regeneration: CavanTown Abbeylands – a new sense of place.....



- Large town centre regeneration
- € 24.17 million URDF match-fund project
- Redevelopment of backlands at centre of town
- State of the art 3-storey business innovation hub
- Modern one-stop-shop Community Services Building
- New multifunctional public plaza and event space
- Private sector development
- Conservation of Protected Structures onsite
- New pedestrian cross-links to surrounding streets

Capital Investment Programme Town Regeneration: Cavan

Renovation of Cavan Town Hall & Public Exhibition Space

- An Arts space for the county that services artists and audiences and complements existing provision for culture in this region.
- Total Scheme Cost €2 million
- €750,000 from Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- €247,600 from the EU's PEACE IV Programme.
- €1M provided by Cavan County Council.
- Further Public Realm work at Townhall under construction.



Capital Investment Programme Town Regeneration: Virginia

New Civic, Cultural and Library Services Centre

- Total Scheme Cost €5.285 million
- 75% RRDF Funding €3.964 million

New Safety and Public Realm Improvement Scheme

- Total Scheme Cost €2.6 million



Capital Investment Programme Town Regeneration: Kingscourt

Vacancy, dereliction, under utilisation of land, reduction of retail presence and poor visual appearance of the public realm are addressed in the proposals to revitalise and regenerate Kingscourt's town centre.

- A redesigned Market Square and Main Street with reduced car parking, increased civic space and cycling infrastructure
- Provision of a new Community Library, Remote Working Hub and New Off-street Carpark within the town centre
- Estimated Project Cost - €12m.
- Part VIII Planning Permission March 2023



PROPOSED MAIN STREET AND TOWN SQUARE



Capital Investment :Town Regeneration: Ballyjamesduff

Ballyjamesduff Community & Enterprise Hub

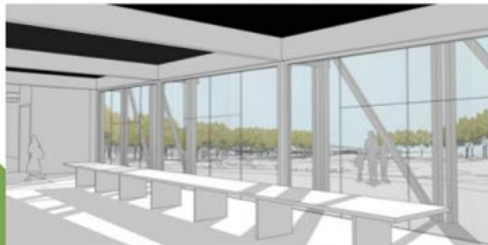
- Redevelopment of the former Percy French hotel
- Includes remote working hub, office space, community room / conference room and café.
- RRDF funding of €6,922,400 with €1,730,600 match funding provided by Cavan County Council
- Redevelopment will be a catalyst for regeneration of town centre of Ballyjamesduff and provide a hub for community.
- Focal Point economic, tourism and community activity



Capital Investment Programme: Tourism Shannon Pot Discovery Centre and Cavan Burren Park

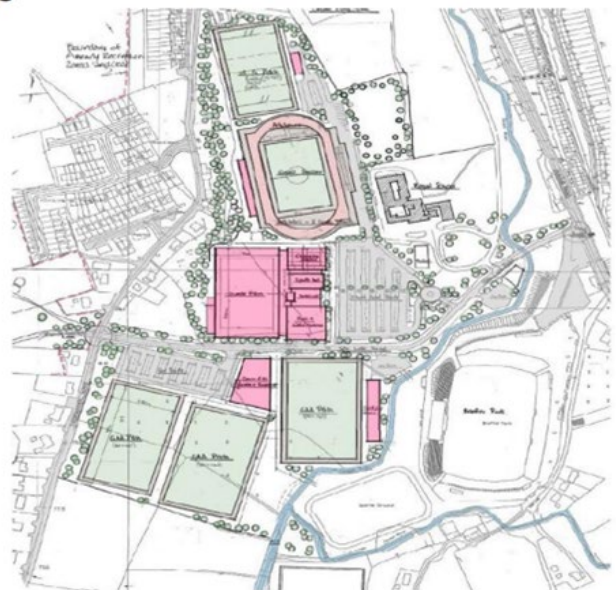


- 1 of only 4 no. Fáilte Ireland Platforms for Growth Investments Grant Scheme match-funded projects securing €6.5 Million Investment.
- World class visitor experience including a brand-new flagship tourism attraction located at the source of the River Shannon with the enhancement of the existing Cavan Burren Park.
- Investment focussed on stimulating economic development, via bed night generation, retaining visitor spend in the region and widening seasonality.
- Supporting regional & county tourism goals and growth strategies.
- It also supports the ongoing further development of the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark and its brand.



Capital Investment: Social Cavan Regional Sports Campus

- Multi-sport outdoor and indoor facilities
- Detailed Design Team appointed March 2023
- Commence construction 2025
- Funding application LSSIF / Other sources
- Partnership with Cavan GAA and Royal School Cavan
- Develop project - potentially on a phased basis



Capital Investment Programme Housing for All: New Build

Cavan County Council New Builds:

2024 131 units in Planning & Design.
to &
2026 142 units at Feasibility Stage.

43 houses **Ballieboro**

At Tender Stage



Capital Investment Programme Housing for All: Regeneration of Derelict Sites

6 units at Eanach Lao, Butlersbridge

- Two town centre derelict houses with significant backlands.
- 6 new units constructed.

15 units at Flemings Place, Ballinagh

- Three derelict houses with significant backlands. (Town Centre)
- Fifteen new builds constructed on the combined site.

9 units at Widows Row, Belturbet.

- Six derelict cottages with backlands. Nine new builds constructed on the combined site. **At tender stage.**

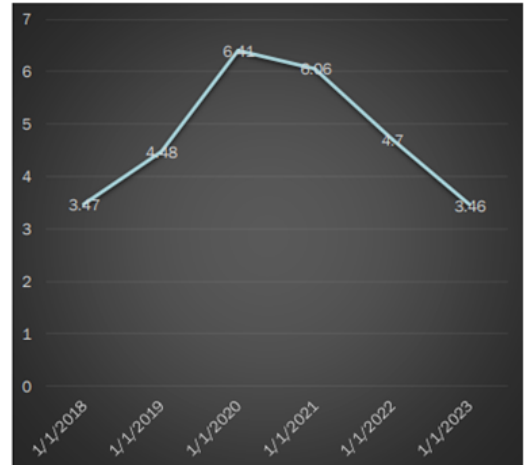
20 units at St. Brigids Terrace, Cavan.

- Six vacant council houses with significant backlands. Twenty new builds constructed on the combined site. **At Tender stage.**



Capital Investment Programme Housing for All: Vacant Housing Units

- 283 Houses returned to use since 2018
- At the start of 2020, we had 132 vacant houses.
- At 22 February 2023, we have 71 vacant houses.
- **46% reduction**
- Projected 31st December 2023 50 vacant houses



Economic Development Solutions

- Cavan Digital Hub – 100 plus jobs
- Cootehill Enterprise Park
- Cavan Enterprise Park
- Abbeylands Business Innovation Centre
- IDA / CCC collaboration
- Advanced Building Solutions



Challenges Ahead

- Ambitious and progressing capital programme will require significant co-funding and staff resources.
- Limited private housing development and shrinking housing supply. This poses implication for social and economic development
- Increased energy costs/construction inflation and limited supply of skilled contractors.
- Challenges and opportunities generated from Climate change.
- Ukrainian response 1431 refugees in the County.

Conclusion

- Ambitious and progressive Local Authority with a strong track record of delivery
- A transformative programme of Capital investment is underway
- Shared vision between Elected members and Executive
- Strong financial management
- Strong and resilient communities
- Significant potential to expand and grow our Economic, Social and Cultural offering



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
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