



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
Final Minutes of the Meeting – Wednesday 29th March 2023 at 11.30 a.m.

Venue: Conference Room, Custom House

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members: Fiona Quinn Noel Harrington
Ciarán Hayes Niall Quinn
Declan Breathnach

Secretariat: Alan McDermott John Goldrick
Valerie Longmore

Apologies: Brian Cawley Margaret Lane

In accordance with the requirement in paragraph 4.9 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies to have two meetings per annum without the Secretariat present, the first part of the meeting was held in the absence of the Secretariat.

1. Minutes and actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of 15th February were approved.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest

A Board member stated that they were engaged in work with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) with regards to Climate Action Plan analysis.

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4. Consideration of Stage 2 meeting with Cavan County Council

It was outlined that in-person meetings with local authorities may give a more comprehensive perspective and allow for greater understanding of events within communities, along with the outstanding work being undertaken by local authorities.

It was highlighted that culture and arts represent a very important attraction point for all local authorities and that, in the case of Cavan, the conversion of two theatres was considered by NOAC to be a great innovation by the local authority and such projects are highly important for the people within these localities.

Furthermore, it was noted that the Cavan Greenway, which was discussed in the Stage 2 meeting, will have links to counties Fermanagh, Armagh, Monaghan and Leitrim. This showed Cavan's cross border cooperation with regards its economy and projects and highlighted the unintended Brexit consequences for Cavan.

5. Approval of the Annual Report 2022

The draft NOAC Annual Report 2022 was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. The Secretariat highlighted that some editing will take place on the report regarding formatting and reducing the text amount for the trend analysis around the Performance Indicator section. Additionally, the report will have to be translated into Irish. Finally, a comprehensive report for the Minister also needs to be completed prior to publication. The NOAC board approved the adoption of the Annual Report.

6. Work Programme

Chair: Scrutiny meeting/ report updates

An update was given on the Stage 1 scrutiny meetings which were held with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and Kildare County Councils in March.

At the in-person meeting with Kildare County Council, there was a detailed discussion on housing. In particular, the operation of housing loans and arrears were outlined as well as an explanation regarding housing in the town centre such as age-friendly housing, the cost of inflation and the impact that this is having on the housing situation. The theme of climate action was also discussed, with a Maynooth carbon free zone being elaborated upon.

The online meeting with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown also had a significant discussion on housing, with the Cherrywood development being specifically referenced. This development contains 10,500 housing units, with appropriate infrastructure, public transport, commercial property and parks.

There was also a discussion on the upgrading works to be carried out on the Dun Laoghaire baths, as was digitisation and the Council's work on reducing its carbon footprint.

Two further stage 1 scrutiny meetings will be held with Cork County on the 30th of March and Wicklow in early May, which will then conclude the six stage 1 meetings for the year.

WG1 (LGGER) Update

The Secretariat gave an update of the ongoing work of the group. It noted that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) survey deadline had to be extended but that replies were being received from local authorities. The Secretariat will prepare a report on the survey and will note any local authorities which haven't made returns in its reports.

With respect to the work on the Regional Assembly Monitoring Reports, a query as to the responsibility regarding the review of the reports has arisen and the function itself may transfer to the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR). It was noted that an update was expected from a meeting between the Department and the OPR and that the outcome will warrant further discussion with the working group.

WG2 (Performance Indicators) Update

The Performance Indicator Workshop was held on the 8th March in the LGMA offices. It was noted that there was a high turnout from local authorities with positive feedback and engagement on the day. The event gave the opportunity to give clarity on any issues surrounding the Performance Indicators and the process involved. The deadline for submission of data for the PI report is 21st April.

Also, a meeting was scheduled for 14th of March between the Chairs of WG1, WG2 and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC). However, this meeting was postponed by DECC to a later date and NOAC has contacted the Department to organise a future meeting. Following the abovementioned meeting, a meeting will be sought with the Department of Transport.

WG4 (FMP) Update

The Secretariat gave an update on the latest meeting of WG4. The Working Group attended an online meeting with the Cork County Audit Committee on 8th March and an in-person meeting with Cork City Audit Committee on 15th March. The exercise was a good opportunity to engage with the audit committees and to respond to a number of questions that they had. It was noted that a meeting is scheduled with the Louth Audit Committee on 21st September.

As part of an online WG4 meeting, the group met with the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) to discuss their work and review Value for Money reports. There was also a discussion around the review of the management and maintenance of local authority housing and an overview of vacant housing in local authorities.

Work has commenced on the Public Spending Code Report 2022 and it was confirmed by the City and County Management Association that there were no changes in the Public Spending Code exercise since the previous publication. Letters to the Chief Executives were circulated on the 10th March, and to all other relevant staff on the 15th March. The closing date for all returns of data is Wednesday 31st May and it was noted by the Secretariat that there is a significant amount of administrative work involved in this task. On review of the NOAC Internal Report 2018, a questionnaire will be devised for the local authorities and is expected to be ready by the end of May.

7. Work Programme for 2023-2024 and Statement of Strategy Approval

The Secretariat had recently circulated the work programme to the board, along with their comments and views. The Chair proposed that this item on the agenda be deferred due to the absence of two working group chairs. The Chair asked that the board members read through the documents and that a separate meeting will be arranged to discuss this item. It was suggested two final versions of this document could be produced, a shorter one for general consumption and a more detailed version for internal use only.

8. Diary for 2023

An updated version of Diary 2023 has been issued to all board members.

9. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is set for Wednesday 17th May, to be held online at 10.30 a.m., with a stage 2 scrutiny meeting to be held on the day also.

The stage 2 scrutiny meeting scheduled with Galway on the 17th May has been deferred, due to the appointment of a new Chief Executive in April. The Secretariat advised that it would seek another Council to attend on the day.

10. AOB

As part of a follow up email circulated to WG3, the Secretariat noted that Innovation Week is to take place between 23rd and 27th October 2023. It confirmed that the Good Practice Event could be held on Thursday 26th of October in Kilkenny Castle and that the NOAC Chair had confirmed that this was agreeable. The possibility of holding the event on a Thursday was welcomed by the Chair of WG3 though it was noted that discussion would need to take place with the working group regarding the date and venue.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Subject	Action
1.	Minutes of 15 th February meeting	To be published on the NOAC website.
5.	Annual Report 2022	The Secretariat will proof read the report and reduce the trend analysis section.

6.	Work Programme 2023-2024	The Secretariat will follow up on the outcome of the meeting with the OPR and the Department regarding the Monitoring Report.
6.	Work Programme 2023-2024	The Secretariat is to organise meetings with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and with the Department of Transport at a later date.
7.	Work Programme for 2023-2024 and Statement of Strategy Approval	A meeting is to be scheduled to discuss this agenda item.
9.	Date of next meeting	The Secretariat is to seek a local authority for a stage 2 scrutiny meeting on the 17 th of May.