



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
Final Minutes – Wednesday 28th June 2023 at 11:30 a.m.

Venue: Custom House

Attended by:

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

Members: Noel Harrington
Kathleen Holohan
Fiona Quinn

Niall Quinn
Brian Cawley

Secretariat: Claire Gavin
Joan Comiskey

Alan McDermott
Valerie Longmore

Apologies: Declan Breathnach
Margaret Lane
Ciarán Hayes

1. Minutes & actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of 17 May were approved.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest

The Chair of NOAC brought to the board's attention an application being made in his locality for a Community Involvement Scheme to carry out works on a local road that leads to his home. The Chair noted that he has no involvement with the application.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Consideration of Stage 2 meeting with Longford County Council.

The meeting with Longford County Council was deemed to have been useful and informative. The board noted the regularity of Longford's Audit Committee meetings and their internal audit system. It also highlighted the importance of Center Parcs as an employer in the county with approximately

1,700 employees. The board discussed the challenges for Longford County Council in delivering initiatives given tight financial margins and how this is an issue for a number of other local authorities. In terms of finances, closures of firms can have a serious effect on a county due to the loss of rates. The availability of LPT can also have an impact.

The Chief Executive mentioned that there were a couple of projects that he would like NOAC to consider for its Good Practice Seminar.

5. Work Programme:

Chair: Update

The Chair updated the board on statements made in the Dáil and published in a Sunday newspaper by an elected member regarding NOAC. In particular, the Chair noted concerns regarding the accuracy of those statements and that a rebuttal was prepared through the Secretariat under a massive time constraint. This rebuttal was published as a right-to-reply article and the Chair extended his thanks to the Secretariat for the quick turnaround. It was suggested that should such a situation arise again that a set of speaking points could be prepared to assist in responding.

WG1 (LGGER): Update

The Working Group last met on 7 June where a presentation was given by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) on requirements and adherence on human rights and equality. There were a number of items highlighted within the presentation such as the need to provide public services for a wide variety of people in a range of demographics that is accessible and relevant to different aspects of work for NOAC. It was noted that each local authority is to carry out a formal assessment and IHREC have asked NOAC to assist under its responsibilities.

The WG1 Chair also provided an update on the ongoing review of the RSES monitoring reports. In particular, the working group is engaging with the OPR who are carrying out a high level review.

With regards Service Level Agreements, a questionnaire was circulated to each local authority with the WG1 Chair noting that such questionnaires could be sent to a more senior level in the future in order to highlight their importance.

Finally, it was noted that the work on ICT Strategy currently assigned to WG3 will become part of the WG1 work programme.

WG2 (PI): Update

The Secretariat provided an update on WG2 and noted that it was examining the data provided by the local authorities and reviewing numerous audit queries in the work for the Performance Indicator Report. A meeting was held with an editor in preparation for this year's Performance Indicators Report and three validation visits have taken place with Fingal on 19 June, Kildare on 20 June and Sligo on 23 June. The meetings were considered very informative and worthwhile and a further three validation visits will take place with Monaghan on 4 July, Limerick on 14 July and Galway City on 17 July. The Secretariat thanked the board members who have attended the previous three validation visits.

Furthermore, it was noted that the Chairs of WG1 and WG2 had an online meeting with officials from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) on 9 May. Resource optimisation, climate action plans, and a discussion on the Departments views with regards to

priorities for local government reform were discussed. A letter also issued to DECC on 2 June requesting a further meeting.

WG3: (CCS) Update

The last WG3 meeting took place on 22 May where discussions took place regarding the Customer Satisfaction Survey and possible future work by NOAC in that regard.

An update was given regarding preparations on NOAC's Good Practice Seminar and the WG3 Chair invited board members to share suggestions for potential themes for the event. The possibility of the use of external PR and Communication services were discussed as well as a reference to the OGP website to assist in procurement.

Furthermore, topics such as value for money and tourism were highlighted as possible themes and these could be very informative in terms of how local authorities engage with those issues.

On NOAC's Communications Strategy, it was highlighted that WG3 was looking at a PR tender and was awaiting input from the WG Chairs.

Finally, the Secretariat advised the board that the Minister had agreed to attend this year's Good Practice Event and that the Communications Department had offered their services to assist in the Communications/PR of the event and this would be discussed at the next WG3 meeting.

WG4 (FMP) Update

The Secretariat provided an update on WG4 noting that a NOAC Review Questionnaire was sent to the Chief Executives of the 31 Local Authorities via the EU Survey System. The questionnaire, which was related to internal audit, contained questions on six main topics with a response date given of the 7 July. It was noted that the Secretariat would issue a reminder to local authorities that hadn't replied in the EU Survey System by Friday 30 June. A separate email was sent to each local authority requesting their Organisational Charts, two have been received to date.

It was noted that the questionnaire is a follow up to a report in 2017 and will feed into the Audit Committee Session which will happen later this year.

An update was given on the Public Spending Code and it was noted that the deadline for the submission of data was 31 May. It was highlighted that 26 submissions were received by the deadline with three received past that deadline and two local authorities were being chased for responses. The Secretariat advised that collation of the data had begun.

The next meeting of WG4 is scheduled to take place online on Wednesday 5 July though it may be rescheduled.

6. Date of next meeting

The date of the next board meeting is scheduled for 13 September along with a potential Stage 2 meeting.

7. AOB

There were no AOB's.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Agenda Item No:	Subject	Action
1.	Minutes and actions of previous meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreed to, and will be published on the website.
2.	Validation Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Secretariat will email board members regarding the dates for the next validation meetings.
3.	ICT Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be transferred from the work programme of WG3 to WG1.