



National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)
Final Minutes – Wednesday 13th September at 10:30 a.m.

Venue: Custom House

Attended by:

Chairperson: Ciarán Hayes (alternate chair)

Members: Declan Breathnach Margaret Lane
Kathleen Holohan Brian Cawley
Fiona Quinn

Secretariat: Claire Gavin Alan McDermott
Joan Comiskey John Goldrick
Valerie Longmore

Apologies: Michael McCarthy
Noel Harrington
Miriam McDonald

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 this meeting was held in the absence of the Secretariat.

The alternate chair congratulated members who had been re-appointed to the board for a second term, along with the appointment of a new board member, Miriam McDonald, who it was noted is a specialist in communications.

1. Minutes & actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of 28th June were approved.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest

A member of the board stated that they had changed employment and could possibly be dealing with local authorities in the future, which should not present an issue, unless a matter relating to a specific local authority is involved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Performance Indicator Report 2022 (draft) for approval

The Performance Indicator Working Group (WG2) Chair thanked the Secretariat and the working group for their input throughout the Performance Indicator (PI) process. It was noted that, compared to previous years, the design and formatting of the report had been amended, taking on board information from local authority queries, removing repetition and producing a more credible report. The trend analysis, along with appendix, tables and charts have been merged, the information is more concise as well as being visually appealing. The Secretariat advised that this year's report required a huge amount of work and several sections are currently with an editor, while other sections are with the desktop publisher. Further input continues on the report, which is currently a work in progress and is well ahead of schedule when compared to previous iterations.

It was highlighted by a board member that the Local Property Tax (LPT) will be linked to Performance Indicators and, therefore, two of the indicators may require future amendments in the report. It was suggested that a note could be considered for entry into the commentary on the PI report to explain the significance of these amendments. It was highlighted that the LPT changes have already been outlined in a government memorandum and the Secretariat will follow up on this area, which has been agreed by government.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to expand the text in the chair's speech, which will be addressed at a future WG2 meeting. A copy of the PI Report will be issued to the board by 21st September for review prior to approval, with a target publication date of the end of September. The report was approved in principle by the board. A copy of the report will be circulated, and subsequently agreed, via e-mail.

5. Public Spending Code: draft for approval

The Financial Management and Performance Working Group (WG4) Chair thanked the Secretariat for the work involved in the production of the ninth report of the Public Spending Code (PSC), which was noted is ahead of schedule. The level of detail and data contained in the report was outlined, in addition to the past appreciation highlighted by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage with respect to both the PSC and PI reports. The WG4 Chair believed the PSC to be an important report, with its information being useful for a possible in-depth overview and review of future trends. The Secretariat hopes to condense the material contained within appendix five which, once ready, which would involve sharing this information with other Government Departments given their funding of some programmes. This was felt could be of significant value and work would commence on that at the end of the month. The PSC was approved for publication by the board.

When published, a press release will accompany this report. Due to its worthwhile information, it was suggested that this report should be brought to a wider audience. The NOAC Chair may wish to bring further publicity to both the PSC and PI reports. The board also felt that it needed

to be cognisant for the future with respect to late responses which were provided by several local authorities.

6. Work Programme

Chair: Update

The Secretariat advised that six stage one scrutiny visits had been completed this year. The Secretariat is currently liaising with Kilkenny County Council to arrange a visit with that Council, which would allow NOAC to have completed stage one visits with all local authorities. Six stage two scrutiny visits remain outstanding and it was suggested that a number of these stage two visits could be conducted over the course of one day.

WG1 (LGGER): Update

The Working Group last met on 7th June with the next meeting scheduled to take place on 20th September. The WG1 Chair explained that the Office of the Planning Regulator is undertaking a high-level review of the monitoring reports of the Regional Spatial and Economy Strategies. This review is due for completion in mid-October.

A tender has also issued for quotations for the review of implementation of Local Authority and Regional Assembly Corporate Plans 2019-2024 and it was noted that the evaluation process is currently underway.

Finally, the WG will establish its position on the ICT strategy and the type of review which should be undertaken in relation to that piece of work.

WG2 (PI): Update

The WG2 Chair noted that it had met with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) previously and is in the process of arranging a follow up meeting with the 10th or 11th October being considered. The Secretariat will finalise details with the Department in relation to this shortly.

Following the publication of the PI report, the Secretariat will also request a meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This forms part of the overall objective of the WG to reach out to multiple stakeholders. The focus of the meeting with the EPA is to outline NOAC's assistance with the PI's, in addition to raising the issue of timing with the submission of its data. The Secretariat will arrange this meeting, which will be attended by both the chairs of WG1 and WG2. A similar meeting will also need to be arranged with SEAI.

WG3: (CCS) Update

With respect to the Good Practice seminar, the Secretariat advised that a final list of projects will be circulated by the Secretariat shortly to WG3 for sign-off. It was noted that the Department's Communications Unit will also be resourced for this event. In addition, the LGMA's National Digital Strategy will be presented at the Good Practice seminar though as an example of good practice.

WG4 (FMP) Update

The WG Chair discussed the forthcoming workshop which will include representatives of the local authority Audit Committee's on 4th October. It is planned that key findings on the review on the Internal Audit Survey that was sent to local authorities in June 2023 and, which is currently being compiled by the Secretariat, would be presented on the day. An overview of the Performance Indicators will also be provided at this event, assuming it has been published in advance. A number of presentations were discussed including one from Longford County Council. It is hoped that several board members will be in attendance and participating at the event. It was noted that the Local Government Audit Service, will also be in attendance to support this event.

7. NOAC Self- Assessment Questionnaire

It was decided that this issue will be discussed at a subsequent board meeting.

8. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be agreed at a later date. In addition, a WhatsApp group will be set up to advise the members of potential future meeting dates.

9. AOB

NOAC's entry into the IPA diary will be updated.

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 be published on the website.
4.	Draft Quality Assurance Report from the draft PI report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Secretariat will email this document to a board member.
4.	Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secretariat to liaise with the Department regarding PIs linked to the LPT.• Draft copy would be circulated to members by email prior to publication
5.	Public Spending Code (PSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The PSC was approved by the board for publication.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will publish the report, including a press release. • The Secretariat will look to condense the material in Appendix 5 of the PSC and share with other Government Departments once ready.
6.	Meeting with EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat to arrange a meeting with the EPA and the SEAI once the PI report is published.
8.	WhatsApp Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will create a WhatsApp group for board members.
9.	IPA Diary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will update its entry to the IPA diary.