



NOAC
Good Practice in Local Government
26th October 2023 | Kilkenny Castle

“To learn, one must be humble. But life is the great teacher”

- James Joyce, Ulysses



Foreword

This Good Practice in Local Government Seminar is organised by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), in partnership with the County and City Management Association (CCMA) and is an excellent opportunity for local authorities to showcase a myriad of solutions-based approaches, as well as initiatives, in continuously striving to deliver improved public services in Ireland.

One of the key roles of NOAC is supporting the development and enhancement of good practice by local government and examples of this from prior Seminars are available on the NOAC website (www.noac.ie). Furthermore, NOAC highlights good practice in its other work, such as the recently published Performance Indicator Report 2022, the Public Spending Code 2022, its Corporate Planning reports and the Scrutiny Reports of individual local authorities which give a detailed overview of how local authorities are performing and how they are facing their own specific challenges.

This is the sixth Good Practice Seminar and the projects that will be presented today illustrate just a small sample of the immense effort by local government in improving and innovating its services, be it in the use of green technology, reaching out to communities, the development of local economies and education or showcasing examples of good practice in developing strategies. This Seminar provides an important insight into the efficiency and effectiveness of the local government sector and how agile the sector must be in its response to evolving challenges

Michael M^o McCarthy

Michael McCarthy
Chair NOAC

Frank Curran

Frank Curran
Chair CCMA

Biographies



Minister Darragh O'Brien, TD Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Darragh O'Brien T.D. was appointed Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in June 2020. He is an elected TD for the constituency of Dublin-Fingal. Prior to his election to the 30th Dáil in 2007, Minister O'Brien worked mainly in Financial Services and was elected to Fingal County Council in 2004. He was elected to Seanad Éireann in 2011.

He has held various positions within the Oireachtas including Vice-Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee, Member of the Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Law Reform, Leader of Fianna Fáil in the Seanad, Opposition Frontbench Spokesperson on Dublin, Foreign Affairs and Housing.

Minister O'Brien is committed to examining the best way forward in terms of housing and accommodation solutions and enabling people to live fulfilling lives, in a safe, sustainable and environmentally-friendly manner.



Michael McCarthy Chair NOAC

Michael is the Director of Cloud Infrastructure Ireland. He was appointed as Chair of the National Oversight and Audit Commission in September 2018 and was appointed to serve a second term in September 2023. He was an elected TD for the Cork South-West constituency from 2011 to 2016. He is a former member of the Dáil Public Accounts Committee. He was elected to Seanad Éireann, for the period 2002-2011. Michael was an elected member of Cork County Council from 1999 to 2003.



Frank Curran Chief Executive Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and Chair CCMA

Frank Curran is Chief Executive of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and Chair of CCMA for 2022/2023 term. He was previously Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council and of Leitrim County Council.

He is a Civil Engineering graduate of University College Dublin and holds an MSc in Environmental Protection, an MA in Local Government Management and a Diploma in Company Direction.

Thank You

A special thanks to Anne Teehan and her team in the OPW for all their assistance with the hosting of the event in Kilkenny Castle.

Thank you to all our panellists for taking time from their schedule to contribute to the event. Thanks to Michael McCarthy, Frank Curran, Kathleen Holohan, Shane Tiernan, Paul Dunne and Marianne Cassidy.

Finally, thanks to Lar Power and his staff in Kilkenny County Council for all their support with the event.



Lar Power

Chief Executive Kilkenny County Council

Lar, a native of County Wexford, graduated from University College Dublin in 1991 with a Bachelors Degree (Honours) in Civil Engineering. Following on from graduating, Lar commenced work in the local authority sector where he remains at present. Lar also graduated from Dublin City University in 2003 with a Masters in Business Administration.

In 2003 Lar became a Director of Services in Waterford City Council managing a myriad of service areas over the next 11 years, before becoming Deputy Chief Executive of Waterford City & County Council in 2014 until 2018 when he then took on the position of Chief Executive with Leitrim County Council. In September 2023, Lar was appointed Chief Executive with Kilkenny County Council.

Programme

NOAC Good Practice in Local Government

Thursday, 26th October 2023

The Parade Tower, Kilkenny Castle

Introduction

MC:	Jonathan Healy
10:00	Welcome Mr. Lar Power, Chief Executive Kilkenny County Council
10:05	Mr. Darragh O'Brien, TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Session One

10:15	Solar Car Port – Wicklow County Council
10:30	Innovative Recruitment Initiative – Dublin City Council
10:45	Kerry Community Response Forum – Kerry County Council
11.00	Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG): Mental Health Sub Group – Galway County Council
11.15	Panel Discussion One: Good Practice in Local Government. Kathleen Holohan, Board Member, NOAC. Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive, Roscommon County Council. Paul Dunne, Chief Executive, LGMA.
11.30	Comfort Break



Session Two

11.45	Computer Science in Every Secondary School in Longford – Creating the Demand – Shaping Our County's Future – Longford County Council
12.00	Explore Cork Tourism App – Cork County Council
12.15	Digital Local Government: Working for Everyone – LGMA
12.30	<p>Panel Discussion Two: Digital and Transformation in Local Government Frank Curran, CCMA Chairperson, Chief Executive Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Michael McCarthy, NOAC Chairperson Marianne Cassidy, Assistant Secretary General, Public Service Transformation, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform</p>
12.45	Closing

CASE STUDY 1

Wicklow County Council Solar Car Port

Ms. Gillian Power

A/Senior Engineer, Housing

The installation of the solar panel car ports at County Buildings in Wicklow is a great example of using existing sites, such as car parks, to generate renewable energy and assist in achieving Climate Change targets.

One of the main barriers to delivering large scale energy efficiency and renewable projects is finance. To overcome this issue Wicklow Council tendered for an innovative design, build, finance, maintain and operate contract to provide a 300kW solar PV array to meet 40% of County Building's baseload demand. This ensured there was no capital cost to the local authority and in return the Council agreed to pay a fixed unit rate for all energy produced by the solar array for a 20 year period. Currently this rate is about a third of the cost of electricity from the grid. This project is the largest solar car port installation in Ireland.



CASE STUDY 2

Dublin City Council Innovative Recruitment Initiative

Mr. Simon Brock

Senior Executive Officer, Employee Relations and Development Unit

Dublin City Council has over 18 months commenced two distinct recruitment initiatives attracting new employees into its operational workforce. These have focused on increasing opportunities for citizens living in areas faced with socio economic challenges through the development of targeted recruitment campaigns and a traineeship programme.

A collaborative and cooperative approach was undertaken between Dublin City Council Human Resources and operational departments and a range of local stakeholders leading to delivering successful local recruitment campaigns and a local authority specific traineeship programme.

These initiatives have allowed Dublin City Council to foster positive relationships with local education and employment services and strengthen existing partnerships with local communities.

The outcome of the initiatives has been the successful recruitment of more than 100 new employees into Dublin City Councils operational workforce and the establishment of a distinct traineeship programme providing a new pathway for employment into the Local Authority sector.

CASE STUDY 3

Kerry County Council Kerry Community Response Forum

Ms. Niamh O'Sullivan

Director of Services, Economic & Community Development
Kerry County Council

Local authorities have provided significant support in responding to the accommodation and other needs of those arriving from Ukraine, where in Kerry, under the stewardship of Kerry County Council, the Community Response Forum was repurposed as part of a high-level governance framework, to ensure effective cross-sector collaboration. This has resulted in the establishment of proactive governance structures, responding consistently to real-life situations, and promoting integration through the development of response initiatives to over 8,000 beneficiaries of temporary protection (BOTP) across the County.

The collaborative approach and the current structures supporting the Community Response Forum in Kerry are enabling dynamic cross-sector teams to deliver on the ground. The local area response teams, for example, have been a crucial link to front-line services and the county coordination team has developed innovative solutions in response to elevated concerns raised at a local level such as the development of a Step-by-Step Guide for Ukrainian Refugees, an Independent Living Guide, a House Rules Guide for Accommodation Providers and Residents, and an information guide to inform Ukrainians about the systems and supports that exist when someone passes away.



CASE STUDY 4

Galway County Council Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG): Mental Health Sub Group

Mr. Kieran Keon

Senior Social Worker, Housing

The Galway County Council Housing Disability Steering Group was set up as part of their Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026. Within that, a number of subgroups to specifically look at cases under each category of disability were established.

The MH subgroup is person-centred, allows for case discussion and progression of complex cases and vulnerable clients that would otherwise not be housed. It is a partnership approach between the local authority and HSE to progress mutual clients. It offers a communication pathway and, for clients with additional needs, to progress to having their own tenancies.

Outcomes:

- Access for individuals to tenancies that are planned with supports in place.
- Quality housing for vulnerable applicants – 'Housing for All'.
- Inclusion in policy.
- Preventing people from becoming entrenched in long stay institutional and residential settings that are unsuitable, expensive and inappropriate for the people's needs.

The work of the Mental Health subgroup is 'Equality & Human Rights in the Public Service in practice.'

CASE STUDY 5

Longford County Council Computer Science in Every Secondary School in Longford – Creating the Demand - Shaping Our County's Future

Mr. John McKeon

Head of Finance

Longford County Council in partnership with schools and industry hopes to shape Longford's future through technology and its introduction to primary and secondary schools. Through the Council's digital strategy, we hope to create the platform that will see Computer Science a Leaving Cert option in all secondary schools in the county.

Our project will help prepare our county for the jobs and opportunities and the lives we could all lead in years to come. Following the closure of peat activities in the south of the county (ESB Peat Station in Lanesboro) and changes in agriculture, Longford like other counties in our region is in transition.

The Longford children that will benefit from this project will help drive our economy in years to come, and by working with primary and post primary schools, in partnership with industry, Longford County Council can help develop the digital potential in our children for future jobs, challenges, and the opportunities that will come in a county eager to realise the benefits of the National Broadband Plan.



CASE STUDY 6

Cork County Council Explore Cork Tourism App

Ms. Rose Carroll

Tourism Officer, Economic Development, Enterprise & Tourism

In response to challenges facing the tourism sector following Covid-19, Cork County Council endeavoured to create a marketing tool that would assist this sector of the economy.

Cognisant of the importance of furthering the digitisation of the sector, a GIS tourism map was developed in 2020 using in-house resources.

The success of the map led to development by CCC in 2021 of the 'Explore Cork' app, a one-stop shop tourism app featuring over 850 places to see and things to do: the first of its kind to be developed by any Local Authority in Ireland.

The project was an in-house collaborative initiative between relevant Directorates, exemplifying best-practices. Cork County Council worked with the successful tenderer, in developing the app, as well as liaising with relevant stakeholders.

The app won the LAMA award for 'Best Tourism Initiative' in 2023.

CASE STUDY 7

LGMA Digital Local Government: Working for Everyone

Mr. Dominic Byrne

Project Manager, Local Government Digital and ICT Strategy

Digital Local Government: Working for Everyone is Ireland's new Local Government Digital and ICT Strategy. The strategy aims to use digital and ICT to improve the way we work and deliver services in local government.

An extensive engagement process was undertaken during the development of the strategy. Stakeholders consulted included members of the public, staff, persons with disabilities, older persons, people from minority communities, Councillors, and technology vendors.

The strategy includes four core themes – Digital Systems, Digital Communities, Digital Workforce and Digital Systems. These consist of statements of intent which present our aspirations and what will be achieved over the course of the strategy.

A strategy implementation plan has been developed which sets out 73 actions that will enable delivery of the strategy. This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant and is delivering as required.

