



NOAC Board Meeting
Final Minutes
Tuesday, 20 February 2024 at 10.15am

Venue: Via WebEx Link

Attended by:

Chairperson: Ciarán Hayes (Alternate Chair)

Members: Declan Breathnach Margaret Lane
Fiona Quinn Miriam McDonald
Kathleen Holohan Brian Cawley
Noel Harrington

Secretariat: Claire Gavin Alan Mc Dermott
Joan Comiskey Valerie Longmore

Apologies: Michael McCarthy

1. Minutes & actions of previous meeting

A minor amendment regarding the WG3 update was suggested to the minutes of 16 January 2024, which were approved by the board.

2. Declaration of any conflict of interest

The Alternate Chair noted that he carries out work within the local government sector in a private capacity. In particular, he noted work with Department of Transport, National Transport Authority and local authorities on sustainable mobility and that this had been noted before.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Work Programme

Update from the Chair

The Secretariat provided an update on behalf of the Chair noting that a Stage 2 Scrutiny meeting would be taking place following the board meeting. Once complete, there will be two more Stage 2 meetings with local authorities before the current cycle is complete.

Discussions on the future Scrutiny Process would take place at the next board meeting, which is to take place in Portlaoise. Suggestions were put forward for the next meeting and it was agreed that a facilitator led discussion on a number of important NOAC topics would be preferable. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Secretariat would prepare a document with suggested topics that could be discussed on the day along with a diary holder, which would be circulated to board members. Board members were asked to provide any additional suggestions to the Secretariat via email.

The Secretariat advised that work on the NOAC Annual Report 2023 was underway and that it would distribute sections relating to each working group to the various chairs for evaluation and feedback over the next week or two.

Additionally, the Secretariat noted that the NOAC Chair had been asked to speak at an AILG Conference in February, but that no update had been received on this.

Finally, it was noted that the ongoing Statutory Instrument to extend the NOAC membership by two persons for a two-year period was going to be discussed at the next board meeting.

WG1 (LGGER): Update and Approval of RSES Report

The WG1 Chair advised that its last meeting was on 8 February and provided an update on its work.

It was noted that a Key Findings Report on the implementation of the Regional Assemblies Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) had been brought to the attention of the Minister and a copy circulated to the Regional Assemblies. The WG1 Chair asked the board for approval for the report, which would go out as a NOAC commissioned report with a foreword from the NOAC Chair. The contents of the report were approved by the NOAC Board and WG1 will seek the advice of WG3 on the publication of the report, from a communications perspective.

The WG1 Chair gave an update on a useful meeting with the LGMA regarding the soon to be launched Local Government Digital and ICT Strategy. The Chair of the WG advised that the information provided insight into the challenges that smaller, under-resourced local authorities are faced with and noted that the group intends to arrange a meeting with the IS officers and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO).

The WG1 Chair informed the board that the Review of the Implementation of Corporate Plans report was at draft stage and it was noted that further discussion would be needed on how to best present the report. It is expected to have a draft report at the next board meeting.

The WG Chair also referred to the document prepared for the Board by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), which had been circulated. The document highlighted the public sector duty and local authorities' responsibilities, as well as NOAC's potential role in this regard.

WG2 (PI): Update

The WG2 Chair reported that the group had last met to finalise the Performance Indicator Guidelines for the 2023 report on 23 January 2024 and a workshop will be held at the LGMA Offices on 27 February, with a large number of local authority attendees registered. The WG Chair noted that the guidelines have been fully revised to allow for improved clarity for local authorities and that a FAQ section was added. It was noted that a new indicator, H7: Social Housing Retrofit, has been introduced. The Secretariat advised that it will circulate a “save the date” email out for the workshop to the board members.

WG3 (CCS): Update and Approval LGMA Customer Service Survey Topics

The WG3 Chair noted that the group last met on 24 January and 19 February. At the 24 January meeting, WG3 met with a representative of the LGMA and the Chair of the CCMA Corporate Committee to discuss the issues around the LGMA Customer Service Survey. The working group noted that data by local authority could be useful to allow local authorities to drill more into the data and improve performance, similar to the Performance Indicator. The LGMA had noted local authorities deliver a large number of services to the public, that the environment was complex and it was suggested that work around Quality Improvement Plans might be of assistance.

The WG3 Chair advised that WG3 would like approval to propose two survey topics/special themes for the LGMA survey. It was further noted that it might be best to select one, as there might not be enough scope to collect information for both. In the January meeting, the LGMA had suggested a special theme on roads. The WG3 advised the NOAC board that it would prefer a special theme on customer service and noted a second theme on youth engagement with local authorities. The NOAC Board approved the WG3 preference of a special theme recommendation of customer service for the 2024 Survey.

WG4 (FMP) Update and Approval of Internal Audit Report.

The Chair of WG4 noted that it last met on 29 January and gave an update on the significant volume of work carried out by the NOAC Secretariat and WG4 on the preparation of its Internal Audit Report, which is before the NOAC Board today for approval. Additionally, the WG4 Chair thanked WG3 for its input regarding communications.

In terms of the report itself, the WG4 Chair highlighted a number of positive findings as well areas where improvements could be made, such as some recommendations that have not been fully implemented by some local authorities.

The WG4 Chair highlighted that the Report contains 17 recommendation's which could be linked into the Scrutiny Process. It was also suggested that the Report could be shared with the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) and one member noted that stronger wording might be used relating to the recommendations within the report.

In terms of communications, the WG3 Chair noted that the Internal Audit Report would be published on the NOAC website and issued to local authorities three days in advance of publication. Furthermore, the report would be circulated to interested stakeholders.

The NOAC Board approved the report.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 26 March 2024 at a location to be confirmed by the Secretariat.

6. AOB

In advance of the upcoming Referenda, the Department of the Taoiseach has issued guidance to all Ministers and Government Departments in respect of the application of the principles of the various Court judgments relevant to the Government's role in referendum campaigns, generally referred to as the 'McKenna/McCrystal principles'. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate further information.

The meeting was brought to a close.

Actions:

Agenda item no.	Subject	Action
1.	Minutes and actions of the previous meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agreed and will be published on the NOAC website with minor amendments included.
4.	Update from Chair: Facilitator led meeting on Scrutiny Process and Work Programme 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Secretariat will arrange a facilitator for the next meeting.The Secretariat to issue a document to the NOAC Board with suggested topics and diary holder.The NOAC Board will advise the Secretariat of any topics it wishes to add for discussion.
4.	Update from Chair: Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Secretariat will circulate extracts from the draft Annual Report 2023 to the various Chairs for their review.
4.	WG2 Update: Performance Indicator (PI) Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Secretariat to send out save the date to board members for the PI Workshop.
5.	Next meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Secretariat will confirm the location of the next meeting.
6.	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Secretariat will circulate further information to the NOAC Board members on the upcoming referenda

