



## **Board Meeting**

### **Minutes**

**Wednesday 17 September 2025 at 10 a.m.**

**Venue:** Via online platform

**Attended by:**

Chairperson: Michael McCarthy

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

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

Apologies: John Byrne

### **1. Minutes and actions of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 24 June were approved.

The Chair referred to the discussions of the previous board meeting, noting that a standard letter in relation to the Performance Indicator Report would issue to the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, with no particular items or issues in relation to the local authority performance being called out.

### **2. Declaration of any conflict of interest**

There was no declaration of any conflict of interest.

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **4. Public Spending Code 2024 Report – For approval.**

The Chair expressed his appreciation for the level of work involved in the preparation of the Public Spending Report 2024, particularly highlighting the work of the Secretariat. The Chair of the Financial Management and Performance working group (WG4) seconded this statement.

On review of the report, the WG4 Chair acknowledged the significant work accomplished by the local authorities, particularly in the area of infrastructure and sought member's views on how NOAC could further promote this work.

The NOAC Chair indicated that he would be available to attend the next WG4 meeting to discuss this further, alongside the Chair of the Communications and Customer Survey working group (WG3), in terms of her expertise in communications.

The Secretariat suggested that an invite could be sent to the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation (DPEIPSRD) to attend the meeting, given the report was developed by DPEIPSRD. The NOAC Chair agreed that this would be beneficial.

The NOAC board approved the report for publication.

### **5. Monitoring Report on Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies by Regional Assemblies – For approval.**

The Chair of the Local Government Governance, Efficiency and Reform working group (WG1) provided an overview of the Review of the Monitoring Reports on Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) by Regional Assemblies. He advised that responsibility for this area of work is to be transferred to the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) in the near future. He mentioned that the report being considered, was the second such report published by NOAC and that it had sought the assistance of the OPR to conduct the review, with the key findings outlined in the report to be brought to the attention of the Minister.

The WG1 Chair advised that they met with OPR in July to discuss the findings, and it was noted that significant progress has been made by the regional assemblies since the first review. One area highlighted was that the regional assemblies need to be adequately resourced and structured in order for them to meet their climate obligations.

The Chair of WG1 conveyed his thanks to the NOAC Chair and the WG3 Chair for their help in terms of drafting a letter for the Minister and the press release for the report.

The NOAC board approved the report for publication.

## **6. Performance Indicator Report 2024 – for approval**

The Chair of the Performance Indicator working group (WG2) expressed his appreciation to the Secretariat for the significant work they carried out in preparing the Performance Indicator (PI) Report.

He noted that the report's layout had been changed from previous years and was more presentable. He noted that it would contribute significantly to the Scrutiny Process.

He advised that there were some gaps in the relation to information for some of the indicators in this year's report, but these had been noted within the report. The Secretariat advised that there were gaps in some areas but it had persevered to obtain this information for this year's report and that now only a small section of one indicator on roads remained outstanding.

The WG2 Chair advised that the latest WG2 meeting was held on the 4 September where WG2 discussed the latest draft PI report and finalised it.

The NOAC Chair acknowledged the huge volume of work produced by the Secretariat during the summer months and remarked that the layout of the PI Report this year was more user-friendly and resource-rich, with a further enhancement in standards evident.

The NOAC board approved the report for publication.

## **7. Work Programme**

### **WG1 (Local Government Governance, Efficiency and Reform): Update**

The WG1 Chair informed that their last meeting took place on 9 July, with the next meeting scheduled for 18 September. He advised that aside from the previously mentioned Monitoring Report on the RSES by Regional Assemblies, the working group discussed its Review of Corporate Plans by Local Authorities and Regional Assemblies 2025-2029, and that the report is near completion.

He advised that there had been progress by local authorities since the last review of corporate plans, though there were some gaps remaining in some recurring areas. He also highlighted that the report examines areas of good practice and, how the local authorities and regional assemblies are implementing these examples of good practice into their strategies.

Further, the working group is gathering information on the performance of local government recorded by other public bodies to determine if it complements the work of NOAC. He advised that they had a meeting with a consultant in order to develop this work and to build on the work already done by the WG and Secretariat in this area and will report back in the future.

### **WG2 (Performance Indicators): Update**

The WG2 Chair advised that the latest meeting of the working group took place on 4 September. He noted that the update on the Performance Indicator Report had been previously addressed, which was discussed at the meeting.

He noted that NOAC should further consider its role as the governing body for performance indicators, and that all performance indicators for local authorities, as well as other departments and agencies, should be channelled through NOAC.

The NOAC Chair advised that he would discuss this point further with the WG2 Chair and would provide feedback to the members at the next board meeting.

### **WG3 (Communications and Customer Service): Update**

The WG3 Chair advised that the working group had met twice since the last board meeting and those meetings occurred on 3 and 15 September.

She noted that the Customer Service Workshop would take place on 22 October, with confirmation of attendance from six board members. Attendance numbers for the event are good with both the Chair and Secretary of LAMA, as well as the President of the AILG and officials from the LGMA, confirmed to attend.

The agenda for the day will include two sessions with three presentations in each session, along with two Q&A panels. She advised that local authorities and the LGMA would be presenting on various projects, which includes topics covering communications, integration, IT portals and AI.

The WG3 Chair felt that in relation to press releases or communications for the other working group's events or reports, they could be routed through WG3 given its area of expertise.

She noted that at the meeting on 15 September, the LGMA presented on its customer service survey. WG3 felt that the survey did not adequately address the main request of NOAC, and therefore, it has asked for the full research pack. The WG3 Chair also indicated that the results revealed that many in the general public were unaware that local authorities are responsible for providing a wide variety of services.

The working group also decided to discuss the development of three performance indicators that could be used to monitor customer service in local authorities, which could be included in future PI reports.

The WG3 Chair will be attending the Chambers Ireland, Excellence in Local Government Awards on 27 November. One of the awards on the night is being sponsored by NOAC and further enquiries can go out to Chambers Ireland regarding other NOAC members attending, if they wish to do so.

### **WG4 (Financial Management Performance): Update**

The WG4 Chair noted that the last meeting of the working group took place on 2 September, where the Public Spending Code (PSC) report, previously noted, was discussed.

The WG4 Chair advised that an update had been received from the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) regarding their Differential Rent Schemes and Rent Reviews report, Development Contribution Waiver Scheme report and Approved Housing Bodies Governance report. All of these reports are currently in progress and expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Furthermore, the WG4 Chair advised that she hopes that the LGAS would speak at the upcoming Local Authorities Chairs of Audit Committees workshop being hosted in November.

An update regarding MyPay was provided that indicated good progress was being achieved, with 27 local authorities on board for superannuation and the remaining authorities being expected to have this piece completed by September 2026. It was noted that the volume of errors recorded by MyPay is minimal, with 1,308 incorrect payments out of 11 million, and would therefore be regarded as being managed well.

In terms of the Chairs of the Audit Committee Workshop scheduled to take place on 5 November, it is anticipated that a representative from Clare County Council will speak on their experience of the external quality assurance review. The WG4 Chair inquired whether the other working group chairs could provide an update on their work at the workshop, as was the case last year.

It was also noted that the Secretariat had reached out to the CCMA to arrange a meeting to discuss the recommendations from the Internal Audit Report.

## **8. NOAC Strategy 2026 – 2028**

A revised draft Strategy document was circulated to the board members prior to the board meeting for discussion.

One board member expressed the opinion that the document was not yet ready for publication, as it was unbalanced in terms of the work completed by NOAC, and felt that a meeting would be required, though not a facilitated one.

Another board member advised that NOAC should clearly outline the specific topics that need to be addressed during the meeting and it was noted that the document had progressed a lot since it was first presented, particularly in terms of content and the need to further review how data is presented in an interactive way.

The NOAC Chair proposed that the board meet in person to discuss the Strategy further and it was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate possible dates for a meeting and that board members would confirm their availability.

The Local Democracy Taskforce was raised by a board member, who noted that it was good to see that NOAC has a role to play in the discussions and that it would assist in highlighting NOAC's role, with the Scrutiny Process having an important role.

## **9. Local Democracy Taskforce – Update**

The Head of the Secretariat advised that the Chair of NOAC sits on the main Taskforce and that she is representing NOAC on the Governance Pillar. The NOAC Chair advised that there has been two meetings of the main group, so far, and that discussions are still ongoing.

A member enquired about the timeline for the completion of the report based on the discussions, and it was indicated that a report with recommendations is expected to be presented to Government in the first quarter of next year. However, it was noted

that legislative change could be an output of the process and, given this, NOAC should continue with their own strategy process.

### **10. Scrutiny Programme – Westmeath County Council**

The Scrutiny Process meeting with Westmeath will take place on Tuesday 23, September at 11.am.

The WG3 Chair will chair this meeting in the absence of the NOAC Chair and board members have been asked to attend the Custom House at 10am to attend a pre-meeting and a photo shoot. The Secretariat will distribute revised question packs for this meeting and requested that board members respond by Friday of this week.

The Chair of NOAC acknowledged the work of the Secretariat in preparation for this meeting.

### **11. Media Engagement.**

The Secretariat obtained approval on 16 September for the quotations related to the PR coverage of the Performance Indicator Report and is scheduled to meet with the successful tenderer tomorrow.

### **12. Update on correspondence received.**

The Secretariat advised that since the last board meeting, they had received correspondence concerning four different local authorities, which were not considered for action by NOAC and had responded to those queries.

### **13. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> November (online)

### **10. AOB**

The Head of the Secretariat noted her appreciation to the secretariat team over, what was considered a very busy summer period and the number of reports and events and meetings organised during that period.

**Actions:**

<b>Agenda item no.</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Action</b>
1.	Minutes of meeting on 24 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 approved	Secretariat to publish minutes on the website
4.	Public Spending Code Report 2024 for approval	The board approved the report for publication.
4	Public Spending Code Report 2024	Secretariat to invite (DPEIPSRD) to attend a future WG4 meeting, along with the NOAC Chair and the Chair of WG3.
5.	Monitoring Report on Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies by Regional Assemblies for approval.	The board approved the report for publication.
6.	Performance Indicator Report 2024 – for approval	The board approved the report for publication.
7.	One on one meeting with NOAC Chair and WG2 Chair	Chair to organise a meeting with WG2 Chair to discuss NOAC's role.
7.	Internal Audit Report	The Secretariat will follow up with CCMA Finance Committee to arrange a meeting to discuss the recommendations from the Internal Audit Report.
8.	Date of next meeting for NOAC Strategy	Secretariat to circulate dates for a meeting to discuss the strategy.
10	Scrutiny Process - Westmeath	The Secretariat will distribute revised question packs for this meeting.