



Final Board Meeting Minutes

(No. 1 of 2026)

Wednesday 21 January 2026 at 11.00am

Custom House

Venue: Hybrid (Room B.36B and via Teams online platform)

Attended by:

Chairperson:	Michael McCarthy	
Members (in person):	Ciarán Hayes	John Byrne
	Miriam McDonald	Margaret Lane
	Noel Harrington	
Members (online):	Anne Haugh	Brian Cawley
	Fiona Quinn	Declan Breathnach
Secretariat:	Claire Gavin	Alan McDermott (online)
	Fergal Corcoran	Deirdre Byrne
	Valerie Longmore	

In accordance with the requirement in paragraph 4.9 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, NOAC is to have two meetings per annum without the Secretariat present. The first part of this meeting was held in the absence of the Secretariat.

1. Minutes and actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting which took place on 9 December 2025 were approved.

2. Declaration of any conflict of interest

There was no declaration of any conflict of interest.

3. Matters Arising

A board member enquired as to the status of the NOAC Statement of Strategy, which had been submitted to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage at the end of November, 2025. The Secretariat advised that it had followed up on this, but that the Minister has 12 weeks in which to review and respond.

The Chair advised that he would follow up with the Minister also. It was noted that the publication of NOAC's Strategy is important, given that the legislation which will be required on foot of the report of the Local Democracy Taskforce will take some time to implement.

4. Work Programme Update

WG1 (LGGER): Update

The Chair of WG1 advised that the Working Group has met twice (11 December 2025 and 15 January 2026) since the last board meeting, when some agenda items discussed in December were concluded and are reflected in the work plan for the WG,

In relation to the development of a report on data published by other public bodies on the performance of local authorities, terms of reference were agreed in January and the WG has engaged a consultant to continue this work and develop the structure and themes to be included in an initial internal report.

Dr Mihai Bilauca, Chief information Officer (CIO), DHLGH, attended the Working Group meeting on 15 January to discuss the ICT and digital strategy for local government. It was a useful engagement and, while the ICT Strategy is at an early stage, it was agreed that WG1 would keep in touch with the CIO in this regard.

The WG1 Chair noted that an event on Corporate Plans is being considered in 2026 and the WG is looking ahead to reviewing the implementation of local authority corporate plans in due course.

The WG1 work plan, which notes its support for the Scrutiny Process and work on Service Level Agreements (SLAs), was agreed.

WG2 (Performance Indicators): Update

The Chair of WG2 reported that the Working Group has not met since the last board meeting. He advised that preparations are ongoing for the Performance Indicator workshop for local authority data coordinators, which will take place on 24 February. The format of the workshop is being reviewed, to ensure that it is interactive and of most benefit to those in attendance.

The Chair advised that the Secretariat is following up on the arrangement of meetings with Government departments, in relation to the development and future introduction of specific indicators.

WG3 (Communications and Customer Service): Update

The WG3 Chair advised that the Working Group met on 13 January 2026 to discuss the work programme for the year and outstanding items from the previous meeting in December 2025.

The WG3 Chair confirmed that she and another member of WG3 plan to meet the CEO of the LGMA in the near future. As the NOAC Chair is also arranging to meet the CEO, the WG3 Chair will liaise with the NOAC Chair in this regard.

The 2026 Good Practice event will take place on 10 March 2026. In order to ensure a high standards of presentations at the event, interested local authorities were invited to submit five minute video recordings for NOAC's review by 19 January.

The Secretariat advised that a file of the videos was sent to NOAC by the LGMA and once the Secretariat have access to review them, those considered suitable will be forwarded to WG3. The Secretariat advised that, as suggested at the WG meeting, that the Minister has been invited to attend the event.

The WG3 Chair advised that meetings with the AILG and LAMA are being planned for the end of March and April and will be arranged by the Secretariat. As discussed and agreed at the Chairs of Audit Committee event in November 2025, WG3 plans to start hosting some webinars on topics related to NOAC reports, commencing with a session on the Annual Report 2025 after it is published at the end of April. The Customer Service workshop will proceed in October as planned.

The WG3 Chair suggested that a dashboard be put in place on the NOAC website, which would allow local authorities to compare their data with that of others, particularly in relation to Performance Indicators. The Secretariat will look into this suggestion.

The WG3 Chair suggested a joint meeting with WG2 to discuss proposed Customer Service Performance Indicators, but it was noted that a new complaints procedure which has recently been put in place by local authorities may influence any such changes.

WG4 (Financial Management Performance): Update

The WG4 Chair advised that the Working Group has not met since the last board meeting. She noted that the LGMA is collating data in relation to the recommendations of the NOAC Internal Audit Report and has committed to scheduling a meeting with WG4 when this has been completed. The Secretariat is continuing to follow up with the LGMA in this regard.

A site visit to MyPay, which is based in Laois County Council, will take place in March. The WG4 work plan will be discussed and agreed at the WG meeting on 12 February.

5. NOAC Scrutiny Process – 2025 process discussion and 2026 proposals

The Secretariat advised that five Scrutiny meetings took place in 2025 and feedback in relation to these has been very positive. As the early meetings were effectively piloting the new process. However, it would be important to assess the process and this will be a separate item for discussion on 4 March.

The Secretariat will work with each WG Chair to develop a list of standard questions which will be used for all local authorities in the forthcoming Scrutiny meeting.

The next two confirmed Scrutiny meetings are with Roscommon County Council on 17 February and Galway City Council on 31 March. It is proposed that the following three meetings will take place on 3 June and one each in October and November and the local authorities for these dates are under consideration. The local authority for the 3 June was selected and agreed by members.

It was noted that local authorities should not be subject to validation visits by WG2 and the Scrutiny process in the same period.

6. NOAC Strategy 2026 – 2028

The Chair will contact the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage as the Strategy was submitted at the end of November 2025 and no feedback has been received as of yet, though a 12 week period is allowed for consideration of the Strategy.

NOAC's corresponding draft Work Programme 2026-2028 was circulated and agreed by the Board.

7. Local Democracy Taskforce – Update from Chair

The Chair suggested that the next Board Meeting on 4 March take place as an in-person away day in Portlaoise and be followed by a discussion on the Local Democracy Taskforce (LDT).

It is expected that the report of the LDT will be delivered before then and the board should consider and discuss the implications for NOAC, including possible changes to its structure, where it may become similar in nature to the Corporate Oversight and Governance Committee. Other recommendations including in relation to reporting requirements were mentioned but recommendations should be decided by the next meeting on 4 March.

8. Update on correspondence received

The Secretariat advised that no relevant correspondence had been received since the last meeting. However, it was noted that there were technical issues with the info@noac.ie email inbox, which has been reported on a number of occasions and is being examined by the OGCIO.

9. AOB

A number of items were raised under AOB.

The Chair of WG2 noted that he felt there may be strategic issues in the local government sector, where collaboration between stakeholders to allow for the full use of resources for some programmes may not be operating as effectively as possible.

One member suggested that such concerns could be shared with the appropriate Oireachtas Committee overseeing such areas. If this is impacting on the performance a particular local authority then this could be raised in the PI report and, possibly, by writing to the appropriate Committee.

In terms of board member training, the Secretariat agreed to survey members with regard to their interest in and availability to attend training on AI and on other training needs.

The Head of Secretariat advised that work on the Annual Report 2025 is well-advanced. The format is being improved and circulation of the report to the Chief Executives, Chairs of Audit Committees, Chairs of Local Authorities and others is planned when it is published.

The inclusion of a list of all meetings attended by NOAC representatives in 2025 is being considered, with the current list noting 64 meetings being held in 2025. One member highlighted that the Secretariat has to coordinate all of these meetings, and raised the issue of resources.

The Secretariat will circulate relevant sections to each WG Chair for their review by Friday 30 January and hopes to have the formatted report on time for the 4 March meeting.

Actions:

Agenda item no.	Subject	Action
1.	Minutes of meeting on 9 December 2025 approved.	The Secretariat to publish these minutes on the website.
3.	NOAC Strategy 2026-2028	The Secretariat and Chair to follow up with the Minister.
4.	Work Programme update (WG3)	WG3 Chair and NOAC Chair to discuss meeting with LGMA CEO.
5.	Scrutiny Process	The Secretariat will work with the WG Chairs to develop a list of standard questions for the Scrutiny process. Third Scrutiny meeting local authority identified Review of pilot stage will take place on 4 March

7.	Local Democracy Taskforce	The Secretariat to arrange the next Board meeting and discussion on LDT in Portlaoise on Wednesday 4 March.
9.	AOB	The Secretariat to survey board members on their interest in and availability to attend training on AI and other training needs.
9.	AOB	The Secretariat to send relevant sections of the 2025 Annual Report to the WG Chairs for their review by Friday 30 January.