NOAC hosts its annual 'Good Practice in Local Government' seminar highlighting outstanding work of local authorities

Today in Kilkenny Castle, Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning, John Cummins TD opened the National Oversight and Audit Commission's (NOAC) eighth 'Good Practice in Local Government' seminar.

At the prestigious event, six local authorities showcased innovative projects that demonstrate leadership and excellence in local government service delivery.

NOAC, as an independent body, is a vital cornerstone in providing oversight of the local government sector in Ireland. The organisation hosted this seminar in collaboration with the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and the County and City Management Association (CCMA).

Speaking at the event, Minister Cummins said:

"**Our local authorities are at the heart of delivering services to the public. The work you do touches the lives of every person in Ireland every single day, often in ways they might not realise.**

"**Innovations, like the ones we are hearing about today, are crucial for our sector, and help us to continually improve these important services for the public. I sincerely thank NOAC for hosting this event to showcase these projects and for its excellent oversight work in this area.**"

The six projects featured include:

Galway County Council	Its 60+ Climate Drive Programme is a volunteer-led initiative, in partnership with Galway County Council's Age Friendly and Climate Action teams. The programme supports older adults in taking practical climate actions through one-off talks and a six-week course focused on transport, housing, food, and waste.
Kildare County Council	Kildare County Council has developed a paperless Onboarding App that provides an improved, efficient, secure and accessible system for both prospective employees and its recruitment team, without additional maintenance costs.

Laois County Council	Laois County Council has automated its Superannuation Starter Notification process using a bot that handles data extraction, validation, and system updates previously performed manually across multiple applications. The project has strengthened data quality, reduced errors, enhanced auditability, and improved processing times.
Offaly County Council	Offaly's Lámhleabhar Gaeilge is a practical Irish language handbook for staff and elected members in the local authority embedding Irish language use in the organisation's culture. The initiative aims to build confidence in using Irish in everyday work, particularly during meetings, emails, and public engagements by addressing the common challenge of uncertainty around pronunciation and phrasing.
Fingal County Council	Fingal County Council developed and implemented an Equity Register Module to securely and efficiently manage the Affordable Housing Scheme, where the Council holds a long-term equity stake in purchasers' homes. The system centralises key financial and legal data, automates complex equity calculations, and supports accurate reporting, ensuring transparency and protection of public funds.
Cork County Council	Cork County Council's library purchasing team, along with the Service Design and Transformation Team, designed a new online form replace the previous paper and email-based process. The new system has streamlined and centralised requests, improved transparency, ensured continuity, increased efficiency through standardised data, reduced paper usage, and enabled accurate monthly reporting.

The seminar was attended by Chief Executives and senior officials from the local authorities within Ireland, officials from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, representatives of elected members and the regional assemblies, as well as a variety of other stakeholders in the local government sector.

A recording of all presentations will be uploaded to the NOAC website, www.noac.ie

For further information regarding the individual projects or the event, please contact noac@housing.gov.ie

Ends.

Notes to Editor

NOAC is an independent statutory body established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to provide oversight of the local government sector in Ireland. Its functions are wide ranging and cover all local authority activities, involving the scrutiny of performance generally, and financial performance specifically. NOAC also has a role in supporting best practice, overseeing implementation of national local government policy and monitoring and evaluating implementation of corporate plans, adherence to service level agreements and public service reform by local government bodies.

NOAC produces a wide array of reports on the local government sector, as well as hosting events such as its annual Good Practice in Local Government Seminar and workshops on a wide variety of topics like customer service, audit committees, corporate planning, to name a few.

In terms of reports, its key output includes its annual Performance Indicator report which examines 45 indicators under 11 separate areas of housing, roads, planning, water, waste/environment, fire service, library/recreation, youth/community, corporate, finance and economic development. The report analyses data from all local authorities and tracks their performance for the particular year and provides trends over a ten year period.

Further, it reviews the individual performance of local authorities, through its Scrutiny Process. This process provides a picture of where a local authority is performing well and where it may wish to improve its performance, as well as highlighting areas of good practice which can be shared with other local authorities.

There is more detail on the six projects featured below:

Galway County Council	The 60+ Climate Drive was delivered as grassroots, community-based initiative led voluntarily by retired UN Resident Coordinator Jacinta Barins. She designed and facilitated a six-week climate action course for older adults, travelling across Galway City and County to meet groups in their own communities.
	The conversational, accessible format of this drive ensured participants felt confident exploring climate science and behaviour change.
	The project exemplifies good practice by demonstrating how local authorities can collaborate effectively with skilled external experts.
	Through partnership with Galway County Council's Climate Action Unit, Jacinta aligned her outreach with local priorities while engaging Men's Sheds, Women's Groups, carers' networks and Active in Age groups - showcasing a scalable, low-cost engagement model other councils can replicate.
	The initiative responds to a clear need to engage older adults - a demographic often overlooked in climate policy.

	By addressing gaps in climate literacy and motivation, the project empowers over-60s to take meaningful, practical climate action.
Kildare County Council	Kildare County Council's Onboarding App was delivered through a fully collaborative, in-house partnership between the HR Recruitment Team and the IT Development Section.
	Using existing Microsoft Power Platform licences, the project was designed through joint workshops, iterative testing, and inclusive decision-making, ensuring the system reflected real operational needs while incurring zero additional cost.
	The project exemplifies best practice by demonstrating how local authorities can leverage existing technologies to solve shared challenges such as high recruitment volumes, remote accessibility, data security, and paper heavy processes.
	Its success highlights opportunities for wider sectoral collaboration, the same pattern (Dataverse, Power Apps, Power Automate, MS Graph API and iDocs) can be used and adapted for other services, supporting council wide digital consistency.
	The app addresses the significant increase in recruitment activity since 2020 and the inefficiencies of a manual, paper-based onboarding process.
	It creates a streamlined, paperless, auditable workflow that improves efficiency, reduces risk, supports blended working, and provides realtime recruitment data for enhanced decision making.
Laois County Council	The MyPay RPA Starters project introduced Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to automate the Superannuation Starter Notification process within Local Government's flagship payroll and superannuation shared service (MyPay).
	The process had been manual, repetitive, and resource-intensive, with increasing volumes and compliance demands placing pressure on staff capacity and turnaround times.
	Delivered under the Office of Government Procurement RPA Framework and primarily funded by the DHLGHs Local Government Digital Transformation Fund with great support from the LGMA's PMO office, the project deployed an unattended software bot ("Mandy") to validate, process, and update starter notifications across systems with minimal human intervention.
	The solution has processed over 2,700 starter notification forms since the project launch in April 2025, delivering efficiency savings equivalent to approximately three full-time

	equivalents, improving data accuracy, strengthening audit controls, and enabling staff redeployment to higher-value work. The approach is scalable, transferable to other shared service processes, and demonstrates practical, people-centred digital transformation within Local Government.
Offaly County Council	The publication of Lámhleabhar Gaeilge represents a practical and innovative step towards promoting the Irish language within Offaly County Council. This initiative demonstrates how local authorities can lead by example in conserving and promoting our national language.

By focusing on accessibility, usability, and statutory compliance, the handbook empowers staff and Councillors to engage with Irish in a meaningful way, ensuring it remains a living part of our daily interactions.

This initiative demonstrates how Offaly County Council is embedding Irish language use into its internal culture, rather than treating compliance as a mere formality. It reflects a genuine commitment to making Irish visible and accessible in the workplace, in line with national policy objectives for language preservation and revitalisation as we move to 2030.

The handbook was circulated internally to all Councillors in 2025, accompanied by a short briefing session to explain its purpose and demonstrate its use. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff have reported feeling more comfortable incorporating Irish into emails and meetings, while Councillors have expressed appreciation for a resource that supports them in fulfilling their public role with confidence. |
| Fingal County Council | The Equity Register Module was developed through collaboration between Fingal County Council's Affordable Housing & Loans Team and Ascendas Business Solutions, who were already designing a Loans Module for Agresso.

By integrating the new functionality into this existing project, the team created a centralised and secure system that records all equity share details, automates complex calculations following partial redemptions and supports accurate reporting and forecasting.

The project demonstrates best practice through its strong interdepartmental coordination, partnership with an Irish software provider, and its scalability for use by other local authorities. It addresses the core challenge of safeguarding significant financial and legal information related to long-term equity shares under the Affordable Housing Scheme, |

	ensuring transparent, accountable management of public funds.

The system now underpins current operations, future planning, and long-term management of equity shares, protecting the Council's assets and enhancing service delivery. |
| Cork County Council | The library purchasing team identified the need to improve the internal, paper-based requesting system by moving to an online digital system.

Staff in the purchasing team collaborated with Cork County Council's Service Design and Transformation Team to design an online request form on the staff portal.

This involved initial consultation between librarians and the SDT team, building, reviewing and re-drafting the form, piloting it in two branch libraries, rolling out the final design to all branch libraries and finally surveying staff for feedback.

The introduction of the forms has resulted in:

- Streamlined and centralised purchase requests, improving tracking, transparency, and team collaboration;

- Continuity of purchase requests being received regardless of staff absences or delivery delays with internal post;

- Increased efficiency because of standardised data inputs;

- The online form should reduce paper usage in alignment with long-term sustainability goals;

Provision of accurate monthly statistics on purchase requests for informed planning and reporting. |