



8th November, 2021.

**TO: AN CATHAOIRLEACH
& EACH MEMBER OF KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL**

RE: LOCAL AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020

Dear Councillor,

The National Oversight and Audit Committee [NOAC] has published a full report on the Local Authority Performance Indicators for 2020 on the 30th September, 2021. Each Local Authority reported on 42 indicators which covered a wide range of the services carried out in the areas of:

- Housing [6]
- Roads [3]
- Water [2]
- Waste/Environment [6]
- Planning [5]
- Fire Service [3]
- Library/ Recreation [2]
- Youth & Community [2]
- Corporate [5]
- Finance [4]
- Economic Development [4]

The Performance Indicators for all Local Authorities which includes the 42 Indicators in respect of Kilkenny County Council is available for viewing on the NOAC Website. www.noac.ie.

These indicators bring together a wide range of information about how all the local authorities perform in delivering services to local communities. The data on performances was collected from Local Authorities by the Local Government Management Agency [LGMA].

NOAC was established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to provide independent scrutiny of local government performances in fulfilling national, regional and local mandates. Its function is to independently oversee the local government sector by reviewing the financial and operational performance of bodies within its remit, overseeing implementation of national local government policy and identifying opportunities for best practice. It allows for the examination of processes and procedures with a view to improving performance and providing a more effective and efficient service to the community.

NOAC selects a number of local authorities for review each year. Kilkenny County Council was not part of the Review in 2020.

It needs to be recognised that delivery of a wide range of services to a diverse population, within available staffing resources and finances can have positive or negative effects on indicators. Diversity within local authorities can also impact on the performance measurement. This will depend on the geographical area being served, density of population, social economic profile, resources and demand for the service. Therefore, caution should be taken in the use of the performance indicator to compare one local authority to another.

The delivery of all services were challenging in 2020 due to Covid-19. We were unable to deal with our customers face to face without prior appointment, carry out normal inspections etc. while Covid restrictions were in place. Despite these restrictions all of our services were delivered by our staff who were either working in our offices remotely or directly.

The Covid pandemic also presented an opportunity for the public to embrace online Motor Tax. Our offices remained closed for a long period and we were unable to deliver the Motor Tax services face to face. Staff were always available to deal with queries over the phone and by e-mail and by appointment where necessary.

The percentage of online transactions for Motor Tax increased to 83.07% during 2020. The percentage for 2019 was 73.31%. The national average for online Motor Tax transactions in 2020 is 81.52% and Kilkenny has exceeded this percentage.

The annual publication of the NOAC Performance Report will assist in policy and organisational decision making by the Elected Member, Executive and Audit Committee.

Kilkenny County Council's performance has been mixed, above the national average in some service areas and this is a credit to all staff. Kilkenny County Council will strive to deliver a high standard of service and will maintain and improve upon where possible within the available staff, financial resources and Covid Restrictions.

In particular, Kilkenny County Council has over the last few years increased the percentage collection levels in rates, housing rents and housing loans. Despite the closure of many businesses due to Covid, Kilkenny County Council had a collection in rates of 83% in 2020. Improvement in the collection of housing loans and rents has been achieved over the last five years and was maintained in 2020. The commitment of staff in achieving these high levels of collection must be recognised and acknowledged. Due to the limited areas available to bring in additional income, the Council will continue to focus on reducing the arrears on rates, housing rents, housing loans and other income during 2021/2022.

The following table sets out the collection rates over the last five years:

COLLECTION OF INCOME - KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL						
Year	Rates	National Average	Rent	National Average	Housing Loan	National Average
2016	94%	82%	93%	88%	80%	70%
2017	95%	82%	92%	89%	85%	74%
2018	93%	86%	93%	89%	88%	75%
2019	94%	87%	95%	90%	90%	78%
2020	83%	77%	96%	90%	90%	80%

Performance Indicators are a managerial tool for the Local Government Sector and the data provides a national practice in service delivery within the sector. Data provides accountability to stakeholders and it is a means of assessing performance across the region and all Local Authorities.

It is equally important that we respond to changes in the public, policy and political environments. Therefore, we must annually review our performance and target areas for improvement in all service delivery areas.

Areas targeted for improvement do not include demand led services where client circumstances and regulatory requirements dictate the data reviewed. For example, it would not be considered appropriate to set targets in the provision of homeless services where the

response of the Local Authority will be commensurate on demand presented and the associated social issues. However, this does not mean that the Council will not continue to provide a quality service to the clients who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. The number of homeless varies from month to month and circumstances such as shortage of accommodation will affect the number of homeless presentations.

The 2020 indicators have been reviewed by the Council's Management Team.

Kilkenny County Council's performance in some areas are below the national average and we will strive to make improvements in those areas. In 2020 and 2021 it has been challenging to concentrate our efforts on improvement in the areas due to Covid-19. Other priorities arose such as the Community Help Line, assisting HSE in some areas such as provision of facilities and housing and Vaccination Centres.

Kilkenny County Council will continue to review the performance of the organisation and strive to make improvements within the available resources.

Due to the high demand for social housing we will continue to minimise the reletting period of our own stock. Our average time in 2020 was 24.72 weeks. The turnaround time will be examined with a view to reducing this despite being below the national average (32.69 weeks).

As the opening up of the economy and all businesses has now commenced, we will need to adapt to deliver our services within some form of restrictions and seek to review areas for improvement.

I attach, herewith, statement issued by Mr. Michael McCarthy, Chairperson of NOAC on the publication of the 2020 Report.

Attached is a sample of indicators from the report showing Kilkenny County Council's performance and comparison with other local authorities.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Butler
Director of Services
Corporate Services

REPORT ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES FINDS MIXED PERFORMANCE IN 2020

*Independent oversight body identified several areas of improvement across
Ireland's Local Government Sector*

30 September 2021: A report by the independent watchdog of local government has examined the performance of the State's 31 local authorities in 2020 across eleven areas. The annual report, by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC), found local authorities delivered mixed results in a range of areas including housing, homelessness, the environment and financial management.

In their seventh annual report, NOAC found local authorities have improved their adult homelessness levels, improved the collection rate of housing loans, stabilised their finances, and decreased staff sick leave. However, areas where downward change was noted by NOAC include social housing re-let times and costs and the impact of Covid-19 on local authority services.

Commenting on the publication of the report, Chair of NOAC Performance Indicator Working Group, Philomena Poole, said: "Public health restrictions and the increased challenges local authorities faced in providing essential services, along with the reduction in income, has impacted performance under various indicator headings. However, re-letting time and cost has again increased and although COVID-19 has impacted this area NOAC notes that there has been a steady rise in re-letting costs since 2014, with only a small decrease shown in 2019 compared to the prior year".

The NOAC uses 42 indicators across eleven areas to measure local authority performance. The data is submitted by the local authorities and other State and regulatory bodies. Some of the key findings in the report include:

- **Housing:** Local authorities had 141,128 dwellings in their ownership, a slight decrease on 2019 figures. There was 3.18% vacancy rate on social houses and the average time for rehousing was 32.69 weeks.
- **Adult homelessness:** 2020 is the first year since NOAC published its first Performance Indicators Report 2014, that there has been a decrease in both the number of adults in emergency accommodation and the number of adults in emergency accommodation that are long-term homeless.
- **Motor Tax:** 81.52% of motor tax transactions were completed online, an increase from 70.21% in 2019 and continuing a steady rise each year from 56.50% in 2015.
- **Environment:** Local authorities registered 84,942 pollution complaints in 2020, an increase compared to 2019. Nine local authorities recorded a decrease in the percentage area unpolluted or litter free, whereas 18 recorded an increase.
- **Financial management:** There were 11 authorities that had a deficit on the Revenue Account at the end of 2020, with all 11 having reduced their deficit amount from that in 2019.
- **Staff levels and sick leave:** Whole-time equivalent staff employed by the local authority sector at the end of 2020 was 29,717.92. This represents an increase of 1.9% since 2019. However, 11 local authorities showed a reduction in staff numbers. The national average medically certified paid sick leave rate for the sector in 2020 was 3.01%, a reduction from 2019.

- **Fire Services:** For fire incidents, 14 authorities increased the percentage in which the first fire tender reached the scene in less than 10 minutes compared to 2019. In the case of 17 authorities, the percentage where first fire tender attendance took longer than 20 minutes increased.

Philomena Poole concluded by saying that NOAC is aware of the impact that COVID-19 restrictions may have attributed to these results and noted: “NOAC was pleased to see that despite the challenges of 2020, local authorities continued to provide essential services and are continuing to develop new approaches to improve their performance. NOAC expects to see continued positive improvements recorded in its 2021 report and looks forward to showcasing some of the exemplars of good practices in its Good Practice Seminar later in 2021”.

NOAC would like to thank local authority staff, the LGMA, and all organisations who provided or reviewed data for NOAC’s Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2020.

-ENDS-

The full report can be downloaded from the NOAC website www.noac.ie in addition to a video from the NOAC board.

About the NOAC

NOAC (the National Oversight and Audit Commission) was established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to provide independent scrutiny of local government performance in fulfilling national, regional and local mandates. One of its functions is to scrutinise performance of local government bodies against relevant indicators and this is the seventh annual performance indicator report published by NOAC in relation to that function.

Since its establishment, NOAC has examined a range of areas of local authority activity, resulting in the publication of 43 reports to date. For further information on NOAC, including all reports published to date, see www.noac.ie

Performance Indicators 2020

Collection levels

	Kilkenny	Average	Highest	Lowest
Rates	83%	77%	93% Fingal	61% Donegal
Rents/Annuities	96%	90%	100% Cork	73% Dublin City
Housing Loans	90%	80%	104% Wexford	61% Dun Laoighaire

Cost per Capita

	Kilkenny	Average	Highest	Lowest
Planning	€ 29.23	€ 31.47	€ 51.31 Dun Laoighaire	€ 19.77 Cavan
Library	€ 1.41	€ 35.95	€ 2.88 Leitrim	€ 0.63 Galway County
Fire Service (Part -time)	€ 52.81	€ 60.79	€ 101.93 Cork City	€ 30.69 Meath

Others

	Kilkenny	Average	Highest	Lowest
LA houses vacant on 31/12/2019	2.39%	3.18%	7.07% Galway	0.70% South Dublin
Average time to relet house (in weeks)	24.72	32.69	85.08 Cork City	11.49 Monaghan
Average Expenditure per house on maintainance	€ 1,122.45	€ 1,119.82	€ 2,441.06 Dublin City	€ 326.90 Monaghan
Service Online Motor tax transactions	83.07%	81.52%	92.01% Dublin City	74.91% Roscommon
Monitoring Private Schemes	100.00%	71.01%	100% 7 LA's	18.52% Leitrim
Planning enforcement cases received in 2019	104		1,443 Dublin City	29 Offaly
Building Control - New Buildings inspected	21.04%	21.71%	78.00% Meath	3.30% Louth
% of households wit a 3 bin service (<i>amended for 2020</i>)	95.73%	89.73%	100.00% 8 LA's	35.00% Westmeath
No of pollution cases investigated	1,317		27,191 Dublin City	508 Monaghan
Average time to mobilise fire brigade (in minutes)	5.51	5.24	6.45 Kildare	3.17 Sligo
Fire Certs - % issued within 2 months	88.30%	55.44%	96% Cork County	21.30% Laois
No of Library visits per head of population	0.86	1.05	1.79 Dun Laoighaire	0.28 Meath
Active memebrship per head of population	0.13	0.11	0.16 Wicklow	0.06 Donegal
No of WTE staff	563.6		5,618.30 Dublin City	289.34 Carlow
Page views on website per capita	17.96	15.56	40.32 Kerry	2.92 Cork City