

NOAC REPORT REVEALS AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities improved their performance across a range of indicators during 2020, despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 and also provided additional innovations and services during the pandemic, according to the findings of the NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2020.

Covid-19 placed a considerable burden on local authorities, with a reduction in revenues and strained resources. However, the NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Commission) Report for 2020 revealed the advances local authorities made last year, particularly in the areas of housing, business supports and online services.

As they continued to deliver essential services and played an important role in the national response to Covid-19, local authorities also established the Community Call service to provide support to those in need of assistance.

Between March and December 2020, they received more than 57,000 phone calls seeking support, while local authority staff made almost 23,000 follow-up calls related to these engagements.

The report has also revealed that local authorities provided a range of new supports and grants to businesses, offered resilience and wellbeing supports to their communities, and worked to facilitate changes to the public realm in the interests of public health and safety.

TIME TO BUILD ON PROGRESS

Tim Lucey, Chair of the County and City Management Association (CCMA) and Chief Executive of Cork County Council, paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of local authority employees.

“Local authorities continued to provide hundreds of services throughout 2020, despite the challenge and uncertainty of Covid-19 and the constraints of public health restrictions. At the same time, we played a vital role in the national response



In the 2020 Report, NOAC’s seventh annual Performance Indicator Report since the first one was published in 2014, NOAC has reported on 42 indicators under these 11 main headings.

to the pandemic, supporting communities, businesses and local economies,” he added.

“We are continually seeking to improve services and increase efficiency and did manage to make progress in a range of areas last year. Now that we are in a more certain situation, with regard to Covid, we will build on our progress, continue to innovate and deliver quality public services.”



Local authorities played a vital role in the national response to the pandemic, supporting communities, businesses and local economies, according to Tim Lucey, Chair of the County and City Management Association (CCMA) and Chief Executive of Cork County Council.



NOAC's Performance Indicator Report illustrates the good performance by local authorities since the first report in 2014, according to Michael McCarthy, NOAC Chair. He outlined the Commission's role in bringing an added dimension of independent scrutiny to local government performance at local, national and regional level, during his address to delegates at the AILG (Association of Irish Local Government) Conference in March 2020.

KEY PERFORMANCE BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

NOAC's Performance Indicator Report for 2020

highlighted how local authorities continued to deliver essential services throughout the pandemic:

- Local authorities added 3,151 units to the social housing stock in 2020, and by December 2020, they owned and managed 141,128 social housing units.
- A total of 86% of motor tax transactions were conducted online in 2020, an increase from 77% in 2019.
- There were 71,871 new users of online eBook and eAudiobook library services in 2020.
- Local authorities continue to upgrade the energy efficiency of public lighting. As of 2020, 38.8% of all public lighting had been upgraded to energy efficient LED.
- Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) approved 12,946 trading online vouchers to support businesses to increase their online offering. LEOs also provided mentoring to 15,931 businesses - an increase from 10,756 in 2019.
- In 2020, almost €300m was invested by local authorities and the Department of Transport to strengthen local and regional roads, while €67.2m was invested in resealing local and regional roads.
- In 2020 the median number of minutes taken to mobilise the fire brigade in full-time stations to respond to a fire incident was 1 minute 28 seconds.
- In 2020, 17,780 community organisations were included in the Public Participation Network (PPN) county registers nationally – an increase of 1,768 since 2019.
- There were more than 74 million visits to local authority websites, while local authority social media following increased by 23% to 3.9 million in 2020.

To view the NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Report for 2020 visit <https://noac.ie/publications>

