

Press Release

Friday, September 28th 2018

LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND INCREASE EFFICIENCIES IN 2017

- **2,532 new social homes added to stock in 2017 – a 43% increase in new additions**
- **The number of new buildings notified to local authorities grew by 34% in 2017**
- **€210 million invested in strengthening and improving roads**
- **3,252 new jobs supported by Local Enterprise Offices**

A report issued today (Friday) by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) shows local authorities continued to deliver improved performance and efficiency in 2017.

The *Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2017* presents the performance of local authorities for a wide range of services. The performance indicators are categorised by local government functions: housing, roads, water, waste/environment, planning, fire services, library/recreational, youth/community, corporate, finance and economic development.

Commenting on the report, Peter Carey, Chair of the County and City Management Association (CCMA) and Chief Executive of Kildare County Council said:

“As the NOAC Report demonstrates, local authorities have a very wide remit, which has been further expanded in recent years. We are a reforming sector, continually seeking ways to improve our performance in the provision of local services and meeting the needs of our citizens. The indicators provide local authorities with an opportunity to assess their performance, and to identify where improvements might be made.

“Housing is one of the major challenges facing Ireland at the moment, and local authorities are at the forefront in addressing this challenge, in line with the *Rebuilding Ireland* action plan. As the figures released today show, local authorities are making significant progress in this area with the number of social housing units delivered by the sector in 2017 increasing by 43% on the previous year.

“As the report notes, local authorities provide social housing in a number of ways including through the delivery of support mechanisms such as HAP and by playing a strategic role in managing the delivery of social housing in collaboration with other bodies. We are ramping up activity across all areas, determined to deliver very necessary solutions.”

Summary of performance indicators for key service areas:

Housing

The local authority sector, working with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is committed to the delivery of the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness.

In total, local authorities, added 2,532 individual units to their social housing stock during 2017.

The number of units added by local authorities during 2017 represented an increase of 43% on the previous year.

By end December 2017, the local government sector owned and managed 133,394 social housing units.

The average percentage of vacant dwellings within social housing stock was 2.7% in 2017. This represents a reduction compared with a rate of 3% in 2016. Vacant stock includes all units awaiting re-tenanting or those awaiting necessary repair work.

The average time to re-let a social house reduced from 33 weeks in 2016 to 28.9 weeks in 2017.

When a social housing unit was vacated, local authorities spent on average €17,107 to make the unit ready for re-let.

There were 5,263 homeless adults at 31st December 2017. However, 4,729 adults exited homelessness during the year.

Local authorities expanded their supply of emergency accommodation nationally to accommodate an additional 1,439 people in 2017.

Local authorities play a key role in regulating standards in the private rental sector. There was a 5.1% increase in the number of registered private rental tenancies during 2017, from 311,295 to 327,187. Local authorities inspected 16,230 private rental units during 2017 – an increase from 13,603 in 2016. Of the rental units inspected in 2017, 79% were found to be non-compliant with current standards.

Building standards

There was a 34% increase in new buildings notified to local authorities during 2017, leading to a 37.5% increase in the number of buildings inspected by local authorities during the year. In total, local authorities were notified of 17,321 new buildings in 2017 and carried out 4,431 inspections.

80% of planning decisions made by local authorities that were appealed to An Bord Pleanála in 2017 were confirmed.

Roads

Local authorities manage and maintain 95,574 kms of regional and local roads throughout Ireland. In 2017, local authorities and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport invested:

€52.7 million in works to strengthen 329kms of regional roads

€114 million to strengthen 1,557km of local roads

€11.6 million to reseal 380km of regional roads

€31.9 million to reseal 1,768km of local roads

In the 5 years 2013-2017, the number of motor tax transactions that were conducted online increased by 42% to 3,631,289 transactions in total.

Economic development and employment

Local authorities play an expanded and significant role in relation to economic development. In addition to adopting and coordinating the implementation of Local Economic and Community Plans

(LCEPs) and the Regional Action Plan for Jobs, the sector provides planning and development services, physical infrastructure and supports social enterprise. The sector also delivers a range of festivals, events and place branding, bringing tourism to cities towns and villages throughout Ireland.

The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are central to local economic development. In 2017, the LEOs assisted businesses to create 3,252 whole time equivalent jobs.

The total number of participants in LEO mentoring programmes in 2017 was 8,393.

The number of Trading Online Vouchers approved by LEOs in 2017 was 1,189 while 546 were drawn down.

Water

Water services are transferred from local authorities to Irish Water under a Service Level Agreement with each local authority. In 2017, a total of 58,100 samples were taken at private water schemes of which 98% were compliant.

Environment

Local authorities carry out a broad range of environmental services including street, park and beach cleaning, litter services, veterinary services, cleaning graffiti, road cleaning, management of recycling centres and civic amenity sites, and management of landfill sites. Local authorities play a regulatory role in relation to waste collection.

In 2017, 66,491 pollution complaints were made to local authorities.

In 2017, 80% of areas surveyed were found to be unpolluted, litter free or slightly polluted.

Community organisations and youth

In 2017, a total of 13,329 community organisations were involved in their local Public Participation Network, an increase of 1,414 during the year.

In 2017, 69% of second level schools participated in Youth Councils/Comhairle na nÓg.

Fire and emergency services

Mobilisation time for fire and emergency services improved in 2017. The average time to mobilise the fire brigade in response to a fire was 1 minutes 27 seconds in full time stations and 5 minutes 29 seconds in part-time fire stations. The average mobilisation time for a non-fire incident was 1 minute 35 seconds in full time stations and 5 minutes 32 seconds in part time fire stations.

40.5% of fire scenes were attended within 10 minutes, while 44.7% were attended within 10-20 minutes

Local authority staffing

The number of whole-time equivalent staff working in local authorities fell from 35,007 in 2008 to 27,380 in 2017, a reduction of 22%. The reduction rate slowed between 2013 and 2015 and in 2016 and 2017 there were small increases in staffing levels.

Libraries

There were 16,935,372 visits to libraries during 2017, while 13,920,251 items were borrowed from libraries.

Ends.

About the NOAC report

The National Oversight Audit Commissioner (NOAC) *Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2017* is available at <http://noac.ie/noac-reports/>

The NOAC *Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2017* presents the 2017 performance indicators for the local authority sector in Ireland. The performance indicators deliver a uniform approach to measurement and benchmarking and the availability of the information is intended to support all local authorities to improve the services they provide to local communities.

The indicators are collected and analysed by the LGMA on behalf of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) as part of the Commission's role in monitoring the performance of local authorities. This report presents the performance of local authorities in 2017 using 35 indicators identified by NOAC. The performance indicators are categorised by local government functions; housing, roads, water, waste/environment, planning, fire services, library/recreation, youth/community, corporate, finance and economic development. While the indicators address the core functions of local authorities, it is acknowledged by NOAC that they do not reflect the extensive range of services delivered by city and county councils throughout the State.

Housing figures

Within the NOAC report, there is some variation between figures recorded by local authorities for additions to stock in 2017 and output figures reported by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. As the NOAC report states, there are a number of valid reasons for these differences including:

- Part V Units which are recorded differently by local authorities and DHPLG:
- Local Authority Mortgage to Rent Units, and Repossessed or Voluntarily Surrendered units which appear in local authority stock figures but not new output in DHPLG figures, and
- Units purchased from local authority own resources which DHPLG may not have been advised of,
- Units inadvertently omitted from previous local authorities returns that are reconciled in DHPLG figures laterally;
- Units which inadvertently incorrectly counted by DHPLG as output due to a change in the categorisation of turnkey units from acquisitions to new build for 2017.

About the LGMA

The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) is a state agency of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government established in 2012 to provide a range of services to the Local Government Sector.

The Agency aims to meet the needs of local authorities and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) in delivering on the public sector reform agenda in the local government sector (particularly in terms of sectoral approaches to service delivery), researching emerging and identified issues, assisting local authorities in the implementation and measurement of change, and supporting, in general, enhanced performance by the local government sector.

Find out more about the LGMA at www.lgma.ie

