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June 2021



Local Authority

National Performance Indicator Trend Report

2014-2019



LGMA
Local Government
Management Agency



Údaráis Áitiúla Éireann
Local Authorities Ireland



Local Authority

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However, there would be no data without the huge efforts of the staff in the local authorities. The NOAC indicators capture data across a wide range of work areas, so large numbers of local authority staff were involved in the production and collection of data including the Data Coordinators, Topic Coordinators, Data Approvers and Data Enterers in each local authority.

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Paul Dunne,
Chief Executive
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Foreword

The annual performance indicators are the key mechanism in place at a national level to monitor and report on the performance of local government. To facilitate the production of NOAC's annual Local Authority Performance Indicators report, a broad range of actors across the sector actively engage in the process of collecting, verifying, submitting and reviewing data.

The CCMA Committees propose and consider the introduction or modification of indicators. LGMA staff support the collection of data from local authorities via the LGReturns system, provide trend data analysis for inclusion in the NOAC report, produce a sectoral summary report for inclusion in the annual NOAC report, prepare infographics and reference material and respond to queries on foot of the publication of the report. Local authority staff directly involved in collecting and submitting data have reported spending between 33 staff days in smaller local authorities and in excess of 500 days in large local authorities gathering and verifying data annually for inclusion in the annual report.¹

LGMA staff began to assemble data from preceding years after the publication of the 2017 data, in order to consider if trends were evident. Consequently, the LGMA were able to provide NOAC with a number of trend tables for inclusion in the published report relating to 2018. In 2020, a more extensive set of trend tables were provided to NOAC for the report relating to the 2019 data. The data illustrated that improvements were being made by all local authorities in almost all areas being tracked.

This document also reports on these trends but additionally, it considers the methodological issues that impact on how effectively we can track trends and progress over time. Particular consideration is given to the introduction or the modification of indicators as these are the

key interrupters of trend reporting. Many of the modifications made to indicators have been as a consequence of findings made during NOAC audits. These annual audits focus on ensuring a common understanding and definition of the data exists across local authorities. As each local authority is autonomous and frequently collects data via a range of different systems across the sector, variations in how guidelines and indicators were interpreted can be a feature of the data. As a result, the annual audits regularly resulted in a tweaking of the guidelines in order to maximise the uniformity in subsequent years.

Within the report it is acknowledged that the indicators are likely to continue to change over time, but it also highlights the need for processes to be developed which facilitate a consistent interpretation of the data in advance of the data being reported.

Looking forward, the CCMA are supporting the establishment of a Central Data hub for local government, where the LGMA will collect sectoral data across key themes on an on-going basis for the purpose of analysis and reporting. Once established, I have no doubt that this project will assist us in working together to improve the quality and scope of data available to monitor the performance of local authorities into the future.

Lar Power
Chair
CCMA Corporate Committee



¹ Survey conducted by the LGMA in 2019.

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Executive Summary

The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC), established under the Local Government Reform Act (2014), provides independent oversight of the Irish local government sector. As part of its statutory remit, NOAC on an annual basis examines the performance of local authorities against relevant indicators that the Commission considers appropriate to refer to. Annual performance measurement indicator reports are subsequently published by NOAC which typically assesses the performance of local authorities across 11 core functional areas which include: housing; roads; water; waste/environment; planning; fire services; library/recreation; youth/community; corporate; finance; and economic development. The published data provided by NOAC aims to support local authorities in critically assessing their performance year-on-year. In the process, the performance measurement indicators highlight areas where the sector is performing satisfactorily, and those where service improvement is required.

In this report, the overall sectoral performance trends across all the relevant functional areas assessed between the years 2014 and 2019 are examined. Through the collation and analysis of the datasets used to inform the reports published between 2015 to 2020, this report can assist the local government sector in identifying progress being made across the strategic areas identified by NOAC. In terms of methodology, this report also investigates the quality of the underlying data used to inform the performance measurement indicators – in terms of consistency in methodology and data collection. The data presented herein consists of 37 indicators, with 87 sub indicators across the 11 functional areas from 2014 to 2019.

Taken together, the findings show that local authorities have demonstrated improved performance generally across the 11 functional areas, although there are some strategic areas

where service improvement is required. More specifically, in the context of housing local government performance across social housing stock and housing vacancy indicators generally improved over the period of analysis. Sectoral improvements were also achieved in terms of a reduction in average re-letting time of social housing dwellings and social housing maintenance costs between 2014-2019. However, the percentage of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that were long-term homeless relative to the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation increased during the period.

In the roads service area, the findings suggest that the quality of regional, local primary, local secondary and local tertiary roads (PSCI ratings) has generally improved nationally between 2014-2019. Moreover, between 2015-2019² the number of kilometres of regional road both strengthened and resealed increased nationally. Similarly, between 2016-2019³ the number of kilometres of local roads (i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary roads) both strengthened and resealed also increased nationally.

In terms of the waste/environment functional area, there has been an improvement in sectoral performance between the years 2014 and 2019 regarding the number/percentage of households availing of a 3-bin service. Similarly, local authorities reported an increase in the percentage of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service during these years. The findings also demonstrate that the number of environmental pollution cases, in which a complaint was made, increased between 2014-2019. Notwithstanding, there was an increase in both the number of pollution cases closed and the number on-hand at year-end during these years. In the area of reducing litter pollution, performance generally improved between the years 2014 and 2019 across the sector.

² As the data collection for this indicator commenced in 2015, data is not available for 2014.

³ As the data collection for this indicator commenced in 2016, data is not available for the years 2014 and 2015.

Within the planning functional area, the number of local authorities' planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála and were determined by the Board increased between 2014 and 2019. Equally, the percentage of determinations of An Bord Pleanála which confirmed the decision made by local authorities also increased between 2014 and 2019.

In the context of planning enforcement cases closed as resolved, the performance of local authorities improved in some respects and deteriorated somewhat across other aspects. For instance, the number of planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated increased between the years 2014 and 2019. However, the number of planning cases closed only increased marginally during the same period.

In terms of water services, the percentage of water schemes in compliance with statutory requirements deteriorated slightly between the years 2015 and 2019. Within the fire services area of activity, local authorities that operate full-time fire services recorded an improvement in the time taken to mobilise fire services between 2014 and 2019. By comparison, the time taken to mobilise fire-services in part-time fire stations remained relatively stable during these years. Regarding the attendance at fire and non-fire scenes, the performance deteriorated slightly over the six-year period of analysis. Specifically, the percentage of fire and non-fire cases in which first attendance was at the scene within 10 minutes decreased between 2014-2019. During these years, the cost per capita of fire services increased during these years.

Within the library services area, the number of library visits per head of the population decreased between the years 2014 and 2019, while the cost per capita of library services increased during the same period. In terms of the youth/community area of activity, the proportion of local schools involved in the Comhairle na nÓg scheme increased between 2014 and 2019. However, the number of organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the Public Participation Network decreased moderately over the six-year period of analysis.

In terms of corporate services, there has been an increase in the number of Whole-Time Equivalent (WTE) employees in local authorities between the years 2014 and 2019. Moreover, regarding the proportion of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave increased marginally during these years, whilst the percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave remained relatively stable during the period. In terms of websites and social media usage, total page views of local authorities' websites increased between 2014 and 2019. Moreover, the number of followers of local authorities' social media accounts also increased during these years.

In the area of finance, the cumulative balance of local authorities at year-end in their Revenue Accounts from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) increased between 2014-2019. More specifically, the cumulative surplus balance of local authorities as a percentage of local authorities' total income also increased between 2015-2019. Performance improvements were also recorded by the sector in terms of percentage collection levels of major revenue sources (Rates, Rents & Annuities, Housing Loans) during the 2014-2019 period.

Within the economic development service area, the number of jobs created with assistance from Local Enterprise Offices decreased between the years 2014 and 2019. Conversely, in terms of mentoring businesses, the number of participants who received mentoring from LEOs also increased during these years. Regarding trading online vouchers, the number of applications approved by LEOs increased between the years 2016 and 2019. However, the number of trading online voucher applications drawn down decreased during these years.

From a methodological standpoint, a notable finding of this research is that of the 87 sub indicators for which data was captured across local authorities between the years 2014 and 2019, full data across this period of analysis existed for 49 (56%) of the sub indicators (9 Housing, 5 Roads, 5 Waste/Environment, 9 Planning, 9 Fire Services, 2 Library/Recreation Services, 1 Youth/Community, 4 Corporate, 4

Finance and 1 Economic Development). The methodological changes introduced within the sub indicators mid-way through the six-year period means that trends in performance could not be accurately compared over time for all of these sub indicators.

As detailed in Table 1 below, of the 49 indicators that had been in place over the entire period (Column 1 + Column 2), 6 were modified significantly so that trend data was interrupted. This has impacted the theme of housing more than other areas with 5 of the 9 sub indicators undergoing some form of methodological change during the period. As a result, annual results across these Housing sub indicators were not comparable over the period.

NOAC rely mostly on existing data collected by local authorities to track performance. Given this, it is understandable that some indicators change in response to better or more relevant data becoming available. Also, some of the changes are as a consequence of audit meetings with local authorities where it became clear that not all data was interpreted or collected in the same way across all local authorities, so more clarification was needed which resulted in changes to returns in some local authorities.

Over the course of the six years reviewed, there were 36 'new' indicators introduced (Column 4 + Column 5 + Column 6), of which 2 were discontinued and 11 were modified. This compares with modifications to 6 and removal of 2 of the 'original' 51 indicators (Column 1 + Column 2 + Column 3). Therefore, there is a

higher rate of modification to new indicators than the original indicators. This is an issue that should be investigated further in order to ensure indicators are agreed and tested adequately before being introduced to avoid modification in subsequent years.

While the need for changes to indicators is understood, it is also recognised that consistent indicators facilitate review and analysis of trend data in which variances can be attributed to performance related issues rather than methodological changes.

Table 2 details the methodological consistencies and breaks in the performance indicator data collection.

Table 1: Summary of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19

Number of original consistent indicators 2014-2019 and still in use	Number of original modified indicators 2014-2019 and still in use	Number of original indicators discontinued during period	Number of new indicators introduced during period and still in use	Number of new indicators introduced during period modified and still in use	Number of new indicators introduced but discontinued during period	Total
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	
43	6	2	23	11	2	87
49%	7%	2%	26%	13%	2%	100%

Note: due to rounding the total percentage figure may not sum up to 100%.

Table 2: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:

Consistent Methodology



Break in Methodology



No Data Collected



Table 2: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
H1 Social Housing Stock						
1 Number of dwellings provided by local authorities	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected
2 Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at start of year	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
3 Number of dwellings directly added (i.e., constructed or purchased) by local authorities to housing stock	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
4 Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
5 Number of social housing dwellings in local authorities at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected
6 Number of directly provided (i.e., constructed or purchased) social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
7 Number of local authority owned dwellings sold in year	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology
8 Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
9 Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under D/HLGH approved scheme	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H2 Housing Vacancies						
10 Percentage of local authority owned dwellings vacant at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H3 Average Re-letting Time and Costs						
11 Time taken (weeks) from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in year when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology
12 Cost expended (€) on getting dwellings re-tenanted ready for re-letting, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H4 Housing Maintenance Cost						
13 Expenditure (€) during year on the repair and maintenance of housing bought or built by local authorities complied on a continuous basis from 1 January to 31 December in that year, divided by the number of directly provided dwellings in the local authority stock at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology

Table 2: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
H5	Private Rented Sector Inspections						
14	Number of registered tenancies in local authorities						
15	Number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities						
16	Percentage of inspected dwellings that were non-compliant with Standards Regulations						
17	Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant						
H6	Long-term Homeless Adults						
18	Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e., 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at year-end						
R1	Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) Ratings						
19	Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary, (c) local secondary and (d) local tertiary roads that have ever received a PSCI rating						
20	Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary and (c) local secondary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end and (d) local tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 60-month period prior to year-end						
21	Percentage of regional roads that received a PSCI rating						
22	Percentage of (a) regional road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories						
23	Percentage of (b) local primary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories						
24	Percentage of (c) local secondary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories						
25	Percentage of (d) local tertiary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories						
R2	Road Works						
26	Kilometres of regional roads strengthened						
27	Cost expended (€) on regional road strengthening						
28	Kilometres of regional roads resealed						
29	Cost expended (€) on regional road resealing						

Table 2: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
R2	Road Works					
30	Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthened					
31	Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthening					
32	Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealed					
33	Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealing					
R3	Percentage of Motor Tax Transactions Conducted Online					
34	Percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online					
W1	Drinking Water in Private Schemes in Compliance with Statutory Requirements					
35	Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements					
E1	Number/Percentage of Households Availing of a 3-Bin Service					
36	Number of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end					
37	Percentage of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end					
E2	Environmental Pollution Complaints					
38	Number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made					
39	Number of pollution cases closed					
40	Number of pollution cases on hand at year-end					
E3	Percentage of Local Authority Areas Within the 5 Levels of Litter Pollution					
41	Percentage of area within local authorities that when surveyed was (1) unpolluted or litter free, (2) slightly polluted, (3) moderately polluted, (4) significantly polluted and (5) grossly polluted					
E4	Green Flags for Schools					
42	Percentage of schools awarded Green Flag status					
P1	New Buildings Inspected					
43	Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to local authorities					

Table 2: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
P2	Number of Planning Decisions Confirmed by An Bord Pleanála					
44	Number of planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board					
45	Percentage of An Bord Pleanála determinations which confirmed (either with or without variation) the decision made by local authorities					
P3	Percentage of Planning Enforcement Cases Closed as Resolved					
46	Number of planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated					
47	Number of planning cases closed					
48	Percentage of planning cases that were dismissed under section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development					
49	Percentage of investigated planning cases resolved to local authorities' satisfaction through negotiations					
50	Percentage of investigated planning cases that were closed due to enforcement proceedings					
51	Number of planning cases being investigated at year-end					
P4	Cost per Capita of Planning Service					
52	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of local authorities per the census					
P5	Applications for Fire Safety Certificates					
53	Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt					
54	Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant					
F1	Cost per Capita of Planning Service					
55	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data divided by the population of local authorities per the census figures for the population served by fire authorities					

Table 2: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
F2	Service Mobilisation					
56	Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of fire					
57	Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents					
F3	Percentage Attendance Times at Scenes					
58	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes					
59	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes					
60	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes					
61	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes					
62	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes					
63	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes					
L1	Library Visits and Issues					
64	Number of library visits per head of population					
65	Number of library items issued to borrowers					
L2	Cost per Capita of Operating a Library Service					
66	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data divided by the population of local authorities per the census					
Y1	Participation in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme					
67	Percentage of local schools involved in local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme					
Y2	Groups Associated with the Public Participation Network (PPN)					
68	Number of organisations included in the county registers at year-end and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN					
C1	Number of Whole-Time Equivalent Employees					
69	Whole-Time Equivalent employees in local authorities at year-end					

Table 2: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
C2	Working Days Lost to Sickness					
70	Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave					
71	Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave					
C3	Local Authorities' Websites and Social Media Use					
72	Page views of local authorities' websites					
73	Number of followers of local authorities' social media accounts at year-end					
C4	Cost of ICT Provision per Whole-Time Equivalent Employee					
74	Cost (€) ICT expenditure divided by Whole-Time Equivalent number					
C5	Overall cost of ICT as a proportion of Revenue expenditure					
75	All ICT expenditure calculated as a proportion of Revenue expenditure					
M1	Six-Year Summary of Revenue Account Balance					
76	Cumulative surplus/deficit balance of local authorities at year-end in the Revenue Accounts from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS)					
77	Cumulative surplus/deficit at year-end as a percentage of Total Income from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS)					
78	Revenue expenditure per capita (€)					
M2	Six-Year Summary of % Collection Levels for Major Revenue Sources					
79	Median percentage collection figures for (a) Rates					
80	Median percentage collection figures for (b) Rents & Annuities					
81	Median percentage collection figures for (c) Housing Loans					
J1	Number of Jobs Created					
82	Number of jobs created with assistance from Local Enterprise Offices					
J2	Trading Online Vouchers					
83	Number of trading online voucher applications approved by Local Enterprise Offices					
84	Number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down					

Table 2: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
J3	Number of Mentoring Recipients						
85	Number of participants who received mentoring from Local Enterprise Offices						
J4	Tourism						
86	Number of local authorities with a tourism strategy						
87	Number of local authorities with a designated tourism officer						

Note: The wording of the sub-indicators 2014-2017 reflects the titles identified in the 2017 NOAC Guidelines, so may differ from the more current NOAC Performance Indicator Guidelines. The wording relating to 2018 and 2019 data reflects wording in the NOAC Performance Indicators Guidelines for those respective years.

1. Introduction

The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) was established in July 2014 under the 2014 Local Government Reform Act to provide independent oversight of the local government sector (Government of Ireland, 2014a). The statutory functions assigned to NOAC include examining the performance of local government bodies against relevant indicators that the Commission considers it appropriate to refer to. Annual Performance Indicator reports are subsequently published by NOAC in relation to its function of examining local authority performance against these relevant indicators. The NOAC Performance Indicator reports follow on from the Service Indicator reports published by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) in respect of local authority activity in the years 2004 to 2013.

Annually, NOAC typically assesses local authority annual performance across 11 functional areas:

- **Housing**
- **Roads**
- **Water**
- **Waste/Environment**
- **Planning**
- **Fire Services**
- **Library/Recreation**
- **Youth/Community**
- **Corporate**
- **Finance and**
- **Economic Development**

The published data provided by NOAC aims to support local authorities in critically assessing their performance year-on-year; and identifying areas which are performing satisfactorily and those where service improvement is required. In addition, the data aims to enable local authorities: to assess their performance relative to other authorities serving a similar population size and type; share best practices; and make improvements where the data indicates evident gaps in performance across relevant functional areas. NOAC Performance Indicators now form a core part of local authorities' operations. Moreover, they are instrumental in identifying areas of potential service improvement. Indeed, some local authorities produce additional reports based on the underlying NOAC Performance Indicator data for their own elected members.

In discussions with the NOAC Performance Indicators sub-group and the NOAC secretariat in 2018, the LGMA outlined a plan to collate existing published datasets and publish a report detailing the trends at a sectoral level – across all the relevant functional areas assessed during the years from the base year (2014) to the

latest year that figures were reported on (2019). Therefore, the data presented in this report examines overall sectoral performance across the 11 functional areas and is not disaggregated at an individual local authority level. Results for each of the 11 functional areas are presented in Sections 3 through to Section 13. While the report illustrates the tracked performance of

the sector, a key focus of the narrative is on the methodological implications of modifications made to indicators or the introduction of new indicators in order to illustrate the value of consistency and agreeing a common definition to data in advance of data collection.



2. Methodology

2.1 NOAC Performance Indicator Annual Process

As part of NOAC's statutory function, it is responsible for scrutinising the performance of local government bodies against relevant indicators annually. To ensure that the performance indicators are valid and reliable, a thorough approach is undertaken in the collation and analysis of data annually by NOAC, the local authority staff and the LGMA. Such processes include:

- Consistent measuring of selected performance indicators across each local authority;
- Designation of Head of Implementation in each local authority to co-ordinate data collection across multiple local authority departments;
- Use of bespoke software system, 'LG Returns', for data input which enables an appropriate audit process to be undertaken by NOAC on all data;
- Provision of data inputs by the LGMA to NOAC in response to a reporting guidelines document issued by NOAC to all local authorities';
- Validation and audit of this data annually by NOAC;
- Collation of further datasets from external sources by LGMA – e.g., the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), the Department of Transport (DOT), the Road Management Office (RMO), the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO), Enterprise Ireland (EI), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Tobin Consulting and An Taisce;
- Analysis of local authority performance by NOAC following validation of the data.

The data presented herein consists of 37 indicators, with 87 sub indicators across these 11 functional areas over the period 2014-19 (Figure 2.1). This comprises of 27,955 unique data entries in the 2014-2019 period. An overview of specific indicators measured across these themes is provided in Table 2.1, before presenting the results across each thematic area.

Table 2.1: Number of NOAC Performance Indicators and Sub Indicators Across Each Theme

Indicator Themes	Number of indicators	Number of sub indicators
Housing	6	18
Roads	3	16
Water	1	1
Waste/ Environment	4	7
Planning	5	12
Fire Services	3	9
Library/ Recreation	2	3
Youth/ Community	2	2
Corporate	5	7
Finance	2	6
Economic Development	4	6
Total	37	87

2.2 Data Quality Assurance

2.2.1 Data Validation and Analysis

The data for this report has been derived from individual NOAC Performance Indicator published datasets between 2014-2019 (National Oversight and Audit Commission, 2015, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). NOAC assesses local authority performance across 11 local authority functional areas as part of its statutory functions.

A standardised Excel template for each thematic indicator was developed by the LGMA to allow for collating of data across each year. Two researchers independently collated the data from finalised LGReturns data across all years using these standardised templates. To ensure accuracy of data input, each researcher independently validated the reliability of the other researcher's work through defined Excel functions. Where inconsistencies were identified in data input between researchers, both researchers subsequently reverted to the LGReturns finalised datasets to examine initial data entries and correct where necessary. This process resulted in an accuracy rate of both researchers' validation exercises. This verified data was subsequently collated into a single Excel template for final validation and verification by a third researcher. This involved independently validating data again across each thematic area against finalised LGReturns data in each year. This process resulted in 100% data accuracy and verification with the initial validation exercises undertaken by the first two researchers. Data was subsequently analysed in IBM SPSS to measure sectoral performance over time across all 87 sub indicators.

2.2.2 Use of Underlying Data

An important consideration for local authorities in compiling data annually is that the information supplied by (i.e., the raw data) may not be the same as what will be presented in

the final NOAC indicators report. For example, a number of indicators report on percentages, whereas local authorities are asked to submit whole numbers from which percentages are derived.

Where raw data is available in a given year however, this allows for calculation of an aggregate national figure for that indicator (see example in Table 2.2). It should be noted however that in some instances aggregate data may not have been used to calculate the sectoral average for an indicator in NOAC's annual Performance Indicator report in a given year. Instead, the median value of all local authorities for a specific indicator may have been reported (see example in Table 2.2). Using a median indicator value to determine where raw data exists at a sectoral level does not provide an accurate representation of the true national average for a particular indicator. Specifically, calculating the sectoral median value for a specific indicator in this way indirectly ignores the underlying aggregate data from which this median value is derived, which if used, would provide a more representative national average figure.

As part of quality assurance processes undertaken with this report, all datasets were subsequently examined by the LGMA to determine the availability of raw data, irrespective of previous reporting methods in NOAC publications. To ensure methodological robustness for national average figures, this raw data was used for calculations presented in this report in lieu of using sectoral median values for specific indicators. **National average figures reported for specific indicators in NOAC's annual Performance Indicators reports during the period 2014-2019 may therefore differ slightly from those presented herein.**

Aggregate calculations are not possible for some indicators however, specifically, where the NOAC indicator in question has requested local

Table 2.2: Comparison of NOAC/LGMA approach to reporting of national average figures annually

Indicator	Raw Data	Potential NOAC reported figures annually to determine national average	LGMA methodology used for this report to determine national average
The time taken from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in year when the dwelling is re-tenanted, averaged across all dwellings re-let during year (weeks)	<p>A. No. of units re-tenanted on any date in year (excluding those vacant for estate refurbishment)</p> <p>AND</p> <p>B. No. of weeks from when previous tenant vacated dwelling up to date of new tenant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure calculated for each individual local authority in given year (A divided by B in Raw Data column) • Median value for all local authorities subsequently derived 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figures at A and B (Raw Data column) aggregated at a sectoral level • Aggregated sectoral figure at A divided by aggregated sectoral figure at B

authorities to provide median values without providing raw data e.g., Section 12.2 (Median percentage collection figures for Rates, Rents & Annuities, and Housing Loans). In this instance, the median value is also used for the purposes of determining a national average figure in this report. Where a median value is used to determine the national average, this is clearly stated under each individual indicator as a footnote.

In addition, as part of the quality assurance process, the LGMA conducted a content analysis review of all NOAC Performance Indicator publications for the period 2014-2019. In instances where NOAC became aware that an individual local authority had incorrectly reported a figure for a particular indicator in a previous year, NOAC reported the correct the figure for the previous year in its subsequent year’s Performance Indicator publication. Where this was the case, the previous year’s figure was subsequently revised by the LGMA prior to data analysis for this publication. This process was undertaken to ensure that the most accurate data was available for analysis.

2.3 Performance Indicator Methodology Consistencies

Each year NOAC reviews the set of indicators and liaises with the local authorities and other stakeholders on improvements or changes that could be incorporated into its report. As part of this process, NOAC reviews indicators each year to ensure they provide an accurate assessment of local authority functional areas. This includes both identifying new indicators where appropriate and adjusting the methodology for existing indicators where necessary e.g., to reflect policy changes, to reduce methodological ambiguity for local authorities.

In this context, prior to analysis of data a research team from the LGMA comprising of four researchers was established to examine NOAC Performance Indicator Guidelines in each of the years between 2014 and 2019. The research team examined the methodology associated with each indicator in detail to identify potential changes in indicators/methodology year-on-year. This exercise was undertaken to identify whether specific indicators were comparable over time given methodological changes to indicators. Material methodological changes across each of the 87 sub indicators are presented in the results section of this report. Changes to some indicators may result in year-on-year comparisons no longer being reflective of local authority performance. Where applicable, material methodological changes are therefore included as a footnote(s) for each specific indicator and are based on unanimous agreement by LGMA researchers following assessment of NOAC Performance Indicator methodologies annually.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter detailed the methods employed for the purposes of conducting trend analysis across NOAC Performance Indicators between the years 2014-2019. Specifically, in Section 2.1, the NOAC Performance Indicator Annual Process was briefly outlined to set the context through which local authority data is generated and validated by NOAC annually. The approach taken to quality assurance in the context of conducting national trend analysis across all NOAC Performance Indicators was subsequently outlined in Section 2.2. A key point of note in this section is that **national average figures reported for specific indicators in the annual reports during the period 2014-2019 may differ slightly from those presented herein**. Finally, in Section 2.3 details were provided in relation to the direction taken in this research where methodological issues/changes arose with respect to specific Performance Indicators annually.

3. Housing

3.1. Policy relevant to housing indicators

3.1.1 Social housing provision in Ireland

The publication of *Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* in 2016 highlighted that a key benefit arising from funding a diversity of social housing delivery models is the provision of a greater mix between private and social housing as opposed to a heavy reliance on large public housing projects investments seen in the 1960's and 1970's (Government of Ireland, 2016). In recent decades, social housing provision in Ireland has moved from the direct provision of social housing, primarily through local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHB's), to a system of housing provision through the private market. This has been facilitated by a number of rental schemes administered by local authorities, including:

- 1. Rent Supplement (RS):** This provides financial support for private sector renting to existing tenants who are unable to meet the cost of their accommodation from their own resources. This payment was first introduced in 1977 and is administered by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social protection.
- 2. Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS):** This is a social housing support introduced in 2004 to meet accommodation needs of individuals who are in receipt of long-term rent supplement and assessed as requiring social housing. RAS is administered by local authorities which source housing from the private rental market and enter a tenancy agreement with a private landlord and the RAS recipient.
- 3. Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP):** This is a Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) funded programme that allows local

authorities and AHBs⁴ to acquire dwellings on a long-term lease and let to individuals or families deemed as need of housing or who are on a waiting list.

- 4. Housing Assistance Payment (HAP):** This was introduced in 2014 on a phased basis to replace long-term RS and RAS. Similar to RAS, local authorities provide housing assistance for households who qualify for social housing support, including many who would previously have been deemed long-term RS recipients. Under the HAP Scheme, the local authority pays the rent directly to the landlord and the tenant pays the relevant differential rent to the local authority (a rent that is set by a local authority based on income and ability to pay).

As part of the State's commitment to social housing delivery in the coming years, the *Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* programme set out targets to support individuals in need of housing supports through an investment of €6 billion. Between the years and 2016 and 2021, the programme aims to have increased the overall supply of social housing by almost 116,000 units across all streams under Rebuilding Ireland which include build, acquisition, leasing, HAP, and RAS. Since 2016, the supply of social housing increased from 19,045 to 28,075 in 2019. This represents an overall of increase of 9,030 or 47% on 2016 (DHLGH, 2021).

3.1.2 Vacant social housing

The state recognises Local Authorities as being proactive in addressing the management of social housing that has become vacant ('voids') in recent years. Significant progress has been achieved in bringing vacant or under-utilised dwellings owned by local authorities back into use. This includes the remediation of some 9,000 local authority units between 2014 and 2017 (Government of Ireland, 2018b).

⁴ Leases can last from 10 to 20 years for local authorities or 10 to 30 years for AHBs.

Measures to address housing vacancy to bring habitable properties back into use can make a significant contribution to addressing overall national housing needs, particularly in cities and large towns, where the demand is greatest. *The National Vacant Housing Reuse Strategy 2018-2021* (Government of Ireland, 2018b) aims to provide a targeted, effective and co-ordinated approach to identifying and tackling housing vacancy across Ireland. The Strategy contains a range of objectives and key actions which will be pursued in partnership with stakeholders and agencies, including local authorities, across the housing sector to address vacancy in our housing stock. Under the Strategy, the DHPLG⁵ also established a dedicated Vacant Homes Unit to co-ordinate actions at central and local government levels and to support local authorities in their actions in addressing housing vacancy rates.

A key objective within this strategy is to develop measures to minimise vacancy arising in social housing stock. This includes the establishment of Vacant Homes Officers in each local authority area to implement actions, continually assess and monitor vacancy rates and report, in a timely manner, to central Government. The Vacant Homes Officers within each local authority will also act as a repository for advice to owners of vacant properties regarding approaches, schemes and incentives that will aid bringing vacant homes back to use.

In addition, under the Strategy local authorities are required to prepare Vacant Homes Action Plans to, among other things, identify actions to firstly, quantify the scale of vacant homes and secondly, to develop plans to address vacancy within their administrative areas. The Strategy aligns with the commitment in the National Planning Framework (NPF) for each local authority to develop a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) to support the preparation of housing strategies and all related housing policy outputs, e.g., city and county development plans, local area plans, traveller accommodation plans etc. It will therefore likely play an important role for local authorities in managing and minimising social housing vacancy rates.

3.1.3 Homelessness provision

The Government's Homelessness Policy Statement published in February 2013 made explicit a commitment to a housing-led approach to end long-term homelessness and detailed the two key aspects of this approach, supply and prevention, are outlined in the statement (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013a). The statement also included a target to end involuntary long-term homelessness by the end of 2016.

Published in July 2016, Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness was designed to accelerate the provision of social housing, deliver more housing, utilise vacant homes, and improve the rental sector and address the needs of homeless people and families. In co-ordination with the Rebuilding Ireland programme, the State agreed to ring-fence a supply of accommodation for homeless households and to mobilise necessary supports. These measures formed part of the government's Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2014b), and in its Action Plan to Address Homelessness (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2014a). These plans were designed to represent a whole-of-Government approach to dealing with homelessness and contained actions in relation to the associated issues of housing, welfare, and healthcare.

Addressing the issue of homelessness involves a cross Government response. Statutory responsibility in relation to the provision of homeless accommodation and related services rests with individual local authorities. However, the DHLGH plays a key role in relation to homelessness through the provision of a national framework of policy, legislation, and funding to underpin the role of local authorities in addressing homelessness at local level.

Targeted initiatives have been developed to support sub-populations and their specific needs to assist them exit from homelessness. The Housing First National Implementation

⁵ Following the General Election in February 2020, the title of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government changed to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Plan 2018-2021 (Government of Ireland, 2018b) details targeted supports for individuals with high support needs through the Housing First programme Government of Ireland (2018a). This is critical to addressing homelessness amongst single persons and couples with no accompanying children, as they make up almost 60 percent of the adult homeless population (ibid).

3.1.4 Private rental inspections

All landlords have a legal duty to ensure that their rented properties comply with certain minimum physical standards. These minimum standards are set out in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 (Government of Ireland, 2019b). Local authorities are responsible for enforcing these minimum standards, including inspection of properties. Local authorities can issue Improvement Notices and Prohibition Notices to landlords who breach the minimum standards regulations. With the growing incidence of private renting, including accommodation provided under RAS and HAP, local authorities' functions related to inspection and enforcement in an efficient and effective manner is crucially important.

3.1.5 Re-letting time and costs

Typically, two factors impact on re-letting time and costs - the extent and duration of any refurbishment work needed to the dwelling and, once ready for occupation, the time taken to allocate and commence a tenancy. The publication of a report by NOAC on local authority housing maintenance and management in 2017 highlighted the need for local authorities to minimise their re-letting times, particularly in the context of the current shortage of housing for waiting list applicants (National Oversight and Audit Commission, 2017). Specifically, a key action in the *Government's Rebuilding Ireland – Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* is to achieve the refurbishment and re-letting of vacant social housing units with minimal delay in line with best asset management practices (Government of Ireland, 2016). This is expected to involve adopting a national re-letting performance standard across all local authorities, a preventative maintenance approach to housing stock management, greater focus on the roles

and responsibilities of tenants and funding mechanisms structured to incentivise swift turnaround, consistent standards, and pro-active approaches by local authorities.

Many local authorities have identified approaches for refurbishment and allocation that have led to improvements in recent years (National Oversight and Audit Commission, 2017) These include:

- Minimising delays in contract awards through framework agreements and pre-qualified panels of contractors
- Providing for better internal liaison between related functions within authorities, sometimes after process improvement initiatives
- Early identification of new tenants and pre-allocation of properties, which also reduces vandalism
- Prioritising refurbishment in high demand areas
- Introducing choice-based lettings

In relation to the time it takes to allocate a dwelling and commence a tenancy, the Rebuilding Ireland programme intends to implement across all local authorities, as soon as possible, a choice-based or equivalent letting system tailored to the specific circumstances of authorities. The implementation of choice-based lettings across local authorities nationally could result in a reduction in the average duration and cost associated with social housing vacancies. A benefit of that approach is that it would quickly become apparent if dwellings exist for which there is no demand could be disposed of to release resources for accommodation in areas of high demand (National Oversight and Audit Commission, 2017).

3.1.6 Housing maintenance costs

Section 58 of the Housing Act 1966 provides that the management and maintenance of local authority housing stock is a matter for individual local authorities. This includes maintenance programmes and carrying out of responsive repairs and pre-letting repairs (Government of Ireland, 1966). While each authority sets its own management and maintenance objectives, broadly common aims across authorities include

providing and maintaining houses to a good standard within available budgets; delivering energy efficient stock; refurbishing void and vacant properties and tenanting them promptly; responding to repair requests from tenants within set timeframes, standards, and levels of urgency; and building good relationships with their tenants.

A review by NOAC in 2017 identified a number of challenges for local authorities in maintaining and managing their existing housing stock (National Oversight and Audit Commission, 2017). These included:

- Maintaining an aging housing stock, 61% of which is over 20 years old
- Improving the energy efficiency of the stock
- Minimising vacant periods
- Resourcing the upgrade or adaptation of properties
- Lack of up-to-date information on the condition of the housing stock
- Competing with private rented stock which is of a higher quality
- Location of stock in low demand areas leading to higher vacancy rates
- Variations in condition of property when returned to the local authority

3.1.7 Conclusion

Sections 3.1.1-3.1.6 outlined current national policy in relation to local authority housing provision. In this context, the following Housing topics are measured by NOAC annually as part of its Performance Indicators process:

- social housing stock;
- housing vacancies;
- average re-letting time and direct costs of re-letting social houses;
- housing maintenance costs;
- private rented inspections; and
- long-term homeless adults.

Specific details of Performance Indicators related to the above Housing topics can be found in Table 3.1, with analysis provided in section 3.2. Availability of data across all six years (2014-19) is limited to 9 of the 18 sub-indicators. Two indicators were discontinued after three years while seven new indicators were introduced, two in 2016 and five in 2017. More importantly however, where data exists for the years between 2014 and 2019, only 4 of these sub indicators did not undergo some form of methodological change.

LEGEND KEY:

Consistent Methodology



Break in Methodology



No Data Collected

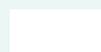


Table 3.1: Housing Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-2019

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
H1 Social Housing Stock						
Number of dwellings provided by local authorities	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected
Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at start of year	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Number of dwellings directly added (i.e., constructed or purchased) by local authorities to housing stock	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Number of social housing dwellings in local authorities at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected
Number of directly provided (i.e., constructed or purchased) social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Number of local authority owned dwellings sold in year	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology
Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under D/HLGH approved scheme	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H2 Housing Vacancies						
Percentage of local authority owned dwellings vacant at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H3 Average Re-letting Time and Costs						
Time taken (weeks) from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in year when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Cost expended (€) on getting dwellings re-tenanted ready for re-letting, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H4 Housing Maintenance Cost						
Expenditure (€) during year on the repair and maintenance of housing bought or built by local authorities complied on a continuous basis from 1 January to 31 December in that year, divided by the number of directly provided dwellings in the local authority stock at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology

Table 3.1: Housing Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-2019 (continued)

Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
H5	Private Rented Sector Inspections						
	Number of registered tenancies in local authorities						
	Number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities						
	Percentage of inspected dwellings that were non-compliant with Standards Regulations						
	Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant						
H6	Long-term Homeless Adults						
	Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e., 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at year-end						

3.2. Housing related indicators

3.2.1 Social Housing Stock

3.2.1.1 Number of dwellings provided by local authorities 2014-2016 (including: constructions, purchases, Rental Accommodation Scheme, Housing Assistance Payment Scheme or Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme)⁶

This indicator is one of the two indicators under the housing theme that was reported on for three years (2014-2016) before being discontinued and replaced by an alternative indicator.

The number of dwellings provided by local authorities (including constructions, purchases, Rental Accommodation Scheme, Housing Assistance Payment Scheme and Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme) increased annually between 2014 and 2016. In 2016, local authorities provided some 16,357 dwellings. This represents an increase of 12,537 in the number of local authority dwellings provided in 2014 (n=3,820) (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Number of dwellings provided by local authorities 2014-2016 (including: constructions, purchases, Rental Accommodation Scheme, Housing Assistance Payment Scheme or Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme)



⁶NOAC Guidance Notes.

2015-2016

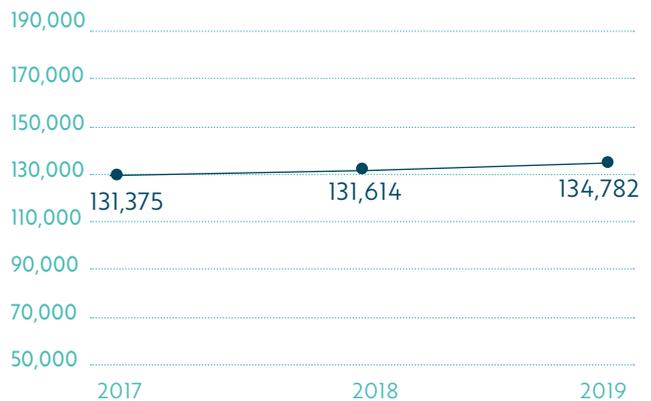
- Traveller specific accommodation (e.g., halting bays) is excluded (but any non-traveller specific accommodation used to house travellers is included).
- Demountable dwellings are included, unless provided under the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

3.2.1.2 Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at start of year 2017-2019⁷

This indicator is one of five new indicators introduced in 2017 under the housing theme.

The number of social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities was slightly higher at the start of 2019 when compared with 2017 and 2018. The number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities in 2019 was 134,782: an increase of 3,407 or 3% from the 131,375 dwellings in the ownership of the LA at the start of the year in 2017 (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at start of year 2017-19



3.2.1.3 Number of dwellings directly added (i.e., constructed or purchased) by local authorities to housing stock 2014-2019

The number of dwellings directly added to local authorities housing stock increased annually between the years 2014 and 2019. In 2019, local authorities directly added 5,619 dwellings to their housing stock. This represents an increase of 4,945 from the 674 dwellings directly added to the local authority housing stock in 2014. In total, local authorities have directly added 15,520 across the six years from 2014 to 2019 (Figure 3.3).

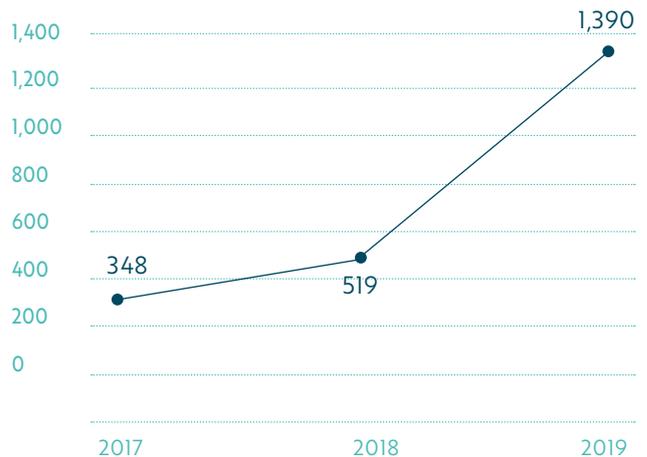
Figure 3.3: Number of dwellings directly added (i.e., constructed or purchased) by local authorities to housing stock 2014-19



3.2.1.4 Number of Local Authority dwellings sold, 2017-2019⁸

In 2017, NOAC began to report on the number of local authority owned dwellings sold. Figure 3.4 illustrates the figures increased annually between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, 1,390 local authority dwellings were sold. This represents an increase of 1,042 from the 348 dwellings sold in 2017.

Figure 3.4: Number of Local Authority Owned Dwellings Sold, 2017-19



⁷ NOAC Guidance Notes 2017-2019

- Figures exclude demountable dwellings and halting bays.

⁸ NOAC Guidance Notes. 2017-2019

- The figure at C should equal the total of Incremental and Tenant Purchase Scheme plus any other dwellings otherwise sold at year end. 2019

- Also includes stock used for housing purposes that was removed due to a change of use in the year.

3.2.1.5 Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end 2017-2019

The methodology for number of dwelling in the ownership of local authorities changed in 2017. Previously it had captured total number of social housing accommodation, but the data presented here captures the number of social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities.

The number of social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year end has increased marginally between the years 2017 and 2019. In 2019, 138,905 dwellings were in the ownership of local authorities at year end. This represents an increase of 5,511 or 4% from the 133,394 dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at the year-end in 2017 (Figure 3.5).

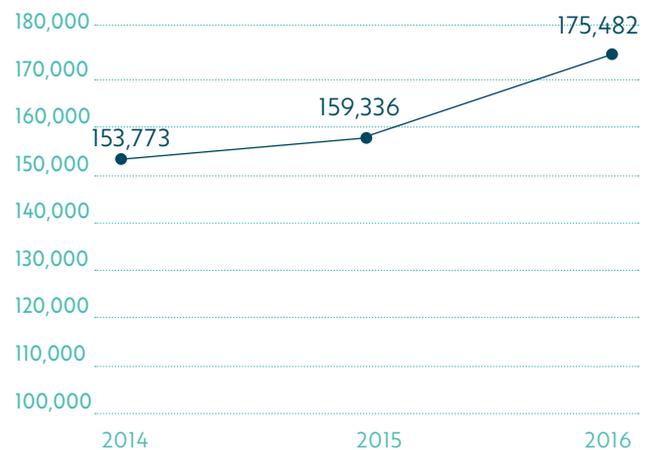
Figure 3.5: Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year end 2017-19



3.2.1.6 Number of social housing dwellings in local authorities at year-end 2014-2016

The number of housing reported in 2014, 15 and 16 are higher than those in following years. This is due to a significant change in the methodology collected. During these respective years, the 'overall' total number of social housing dwellings in LA's which comprised of the total number of: dwellings constructed or purchased by an LA; dwellings provided under RAS and HAP; dwellings provided under leasing a scheme (SHCEP) or Mortgage to Rent Scheme; and single rural dwellings that are planned for demolition or sale due to dereliction.

Figure 3.6: Number of social housing dwellings in local authorities at year end 2014-16



In subsequent years (2017-2019), the figure of dwellings provided by LAs at year-end is calculated as follows: the total number dwellings in the ownership of LA at the start of the year and the total number of dwellings added to the LA social housing stock (constructed or acquired) less the total number of LA owned dwellings sold during the year and the total number of LA owned demolished during the year.

The number of social housing dwellings in local authorities at year-end increased annually between 2014 and 2016. In 2016, there were 175,482 social housing dwellings across local authorities. This represented an increase of 21,709 or 14% from the 153,773 social housing dwellings in local authorities in 2014 (Figure 3.6).

3.2.1.7 Number of directly provided (i.e., constructed or purchased) social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end 2014-2019

The number of directly provided (i.e., constructed or purchased) social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end increased annually between 2014 and 2019. At the year-end in 2019, local authorities directly provided 138,662 social housing dwellings. This represents an increase of 9,151 or 7% from the 129,511 total number of dwellings directly provided in 2014 (at year end) (Figure 3.7).

3.2.1.8 Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished 2017-2019

The number of local authority owned dwellings demolished is a new indicator that was introduced in 2017. The findings illustrate that there was a decrease in numbers between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, local authorities demolished 106 dwellings. This represents a decrease of 91 or 46% from the 197 dwellings demolished in 2014 (Figure 3.8).

3.2.1.9 Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under D/HLGH approved scheme 2017-2019

Once again, this was indicator was only introduced in 2017-2019. The total number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) approved scheme has decreased overtime. In 2019, 243 local authority owned dwellings were planned for demolition: representing an overall decrease of 74 or 23% from the 317 local authority dwellings planned for demolition in 2017. During these years, the number of houses planned for demolition decreased from 343 in 2017 to 212 in 2016, but then increased again to 243 in 2019 (Figure 3.9).

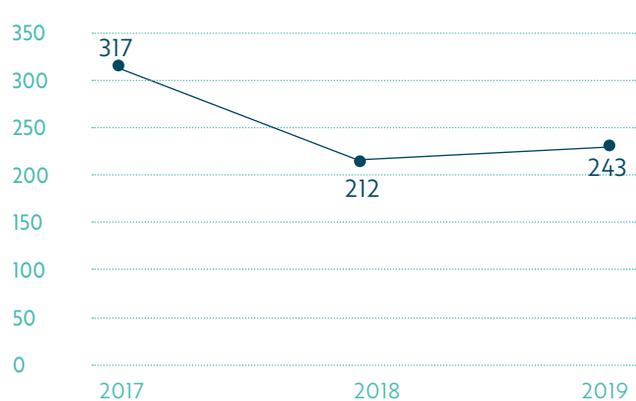
Figure 3.7: Number of directly provided (i.e., constructed or purchased) social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end 2014-19



Figure 3.8: Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished 2017-19



Figure 3.9: Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under D/HLGH approved scheme, 2017-19



3.2.2 Housing Vacancies

3.2.2.1 Percentage of local authority owned dwellings vacant at year-end 2014-2019⁹

The percentage of local authority owned dwellings that were vacant at the end of the year decreased between the years 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 3% of local authorities' dwellings were vacant compared to almost 4% in 2014. This represents a decrease of almost one percentage point in the proportion of local authority owned dwellings that were vacant at year-end between 2014 and 2019 (Figure 3.10).

3.2.3 Average Re-letting Time and Costs

3.2.3.1 Time taken (weeks) from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in year when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year 2014-2019¹⁰

The average time taken for local authorities to re-tenant their dwellings decreased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, local authorities took 28.17 weeks to re-tenant a dwelling, compared to 31.43 weeks in 2014. This represents an overall decrease of 3.27 weeks or 10% in the total time taken to re-tenant a dwelling between 2014 and 2019 (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.10: Percentage of local authority owned dwellings vacant at year-end 2014-19



Figure 3.11: Time taken (weeks) from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in year when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year 2014-19



⁹ NOAC Guidance Notes

2015-2017

- 2015 figures include dwellings earmarked for demolition.
- 2016 to 2019 exclude dwellings earmarked for demolition. Figures for dwellings earmarked for demolition were as follows:
 - o 2015: Not available
 - o 2016: 42
 - o 2017: 317
 - o 2018: 212
 - o 2019: 243

¹⁰ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2016

- Calculation is based on the number of weeks from when the previous tenant vacated the dwelling (i.e., keys returned or tenant moved out) up to the date of the new tenant's first rent debit, with any partial week decimalised to two decimal places, totalled for all dwellings.

2017

- Calculation is based on the number of weeks from when the previous tenant vacated the dwelling (i.e., the earliest of any vacation date notified to the authority, the date the keys were returned by the previous tenant or the last date covered by a rent payment) up to the date of the new tenant's first rent debit, with any partial week decimalised to two decimal places, totalled for all dwellings.
- Calculation is based on when the keys have been handed back to a local authority until the date of re-tenancing when the keys have been issued to a new tenant.

2018-19

- Calculation is based on when the keys have been handed back to a local authority until the date of re-tenancing when the keys have been issued to a new tenant.

3.2.3.2 Cost expended (€) on getting dwellings re-tenanted ready for re-letting, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year 2014-2019¹¹

The cost expended on getting dwellings ready for re-letting increased annually between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, local authorities expended €18,337 on getting dwellings ready for re-letting, compared to €11,535 spend in 2014. This represents an overall increase of €6,802 or 59% in the total expenditure spent on getting dwellings ready for re-letting between 2014 and 2019 (Figure 3.12).

3.2.4 Housing Maintenance Cost

3.2.4.1 Expenditure (€) during year on the repair and maintenance of housing bought or built by local authorities complied on a continuous basis from 1 January to 31 December in that year, divided by the number of directly provided dwellings in the local authority stock at year-end 2014-2019¹²

The average annual expenditure on repair and maintenance of housing bought or built by local authorities decreased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, local authorities expended an average €1,170 on repairs and maintenance across each dwelling within the housing stock. During these years, total spending increased from €1,272 in 2014 to €1,506 in 2016, but then decreased to €1,170 in 2019. Overall total expenditure on the repair and maintenance of housing bought or built by local authorities decreased by €103 or 8% across the six years (2014-19) (Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.12: Cost expended (€) on getting dwellings re-tenanted ready for re-letting, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year 2014-19



Figure 3.13: Expenditure (€) during year on the repair and maintenance of housing bought or built by local authorities complied on a continuous basis from 1 January to 31 December in that year, divided by the number of directly provided dwellings in the local authority stock at year end 2014-19



¹¹ NOAC Guidance Notes

2015-2016

- Calculation is based on direct and indirect re-letting costs.

2017-2019

- Calculation is based on direct re-letting costs only i.e. direct labour, contracted works, plant & machinery and materials costs. The following costs are not included – overheads, CMC, administration & technical salaries.

¹² NOAC Guidance Notes

2015-2016

- Calculation is based on both direct and indirect maintenance costs.

2017-2019

- Calculation is based on direct maintenance costs. i.e. direct labour, contracted works, plant & machinery and materials costs. The following costs are not included - overhead, CMC, administration & technical salaries, management fees, Local Property Tax, expenditure on accommodation provided under the Traveller Accommodation Programme, estate management costs and the cost of insuring the stock.

3.2.5 Private Rented Sector Inspections

3.2.5.1 Number of registered tenancies in local authorities 2014-2019

The number of registered tenancies in local authorities increased between the years 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 324,188 registered tenancies were recorded across local authorities, compared to 285,025 registered tenancies in 2014. This represents an overall increase of 39,163 or 14% in the total number of registered tenancies between 2014 and 2019 (Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14: Number of registered tenancies in local authorities 2014-19



3.2.5.2 Number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities 2014-2019¹³

The number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities increased between the years 2014 and 2019. During these years, the total number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities decreased from 18,553 in 2014 to 13,603 in 2016, but then increased substantially to 32,196 in 2019. Overall, rented dwelling inspections by local authorities increased by 13,643 or 74% across the six-years (2014-19) (Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15: Number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities 2014-19



3.2.5.3 Percentage of inspected dwellings that were non-compliant with Standards Regulations 2016-2018

The percentage of inspected dwellings that were non-compliant with the Standards Regulations was a new indicator introduced in 2016. The data reveals an increase annually between 2016 and 2018. In 2018, almost 83% of dwellings inspected were found not to be compliant with the Standards Regulations, compared to 75% in 2016. This represents an increase of eight percentage points over the three years (2016-18) (Figure 3.16)

Figure 3.16: Percentage of inspected dwellings that were non-compliant with Standards Regulations 2016-18



Note: Due to methodological changes, the data for 2019 has been excluded from this graph.

¹³ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2015

• Calculations include repeat inspections.

2016-2019

• Calculations do not include repeat inspections.

3.2.5.4 Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant 2016-2019¹⁴

This indicator was introduced in 2016. The data reveals that the number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant increased between 2016 and 2019. In 2019, 9,326 non-compliant dwellings became compliant nationally, compared to 5,101 in 2016. During these years, the number of non-compliant dwelling to become compliant decreased to 3,557 in 2017, but then subsequently increased to 9,326 in 2019. This represents an overall increase of 4,225 or 83% across the four years (2016-19) (Figure 3.17).

3.2.6 Long-term Homeless Adults

3.2.6.1 Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e., 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at year-end 2014-2019

The percentage of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that were long-term homeless relative to the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation increased sporadically between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, almost 62% of adult individuals in emergency accommodation were long-term homeless, compared to 47% in 2014. This represents an overall increase of 15 percentage points across the six years (2014-19) (Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.17: Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant 2016-19

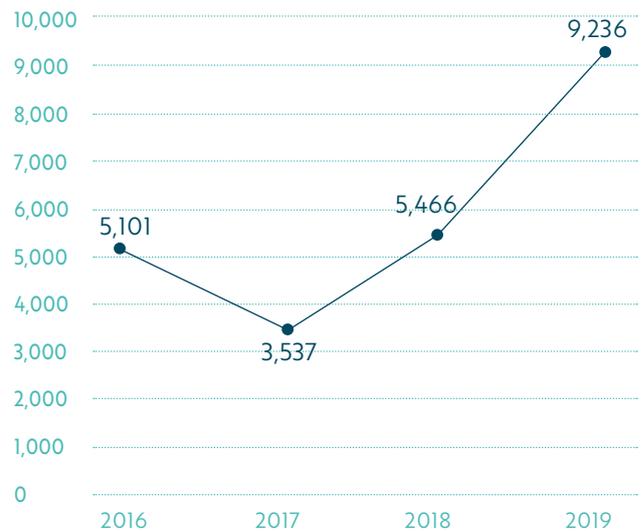


Figure 3.18: Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e., 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at year-end 2014-19



¹⁴ NOAC Guidance Notes 2017

• Figure for 2017 of 23 in NOAC Performance Indicator report for Donegal County Council was subsequently revised by NOAC for 2017 to 231 as per commentary in NOAC Performance Indicator 2018 report. Revised national figure of 3,537 for 2017 therefore differs from initial national figure of 3,329 reported in NOAC Performance Indicator 2017 report.

3.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, whilst primary housing indicators have remained largely unchanged during the period, sub indicators within these themes have been subject to significant changes in methodologies between 2014-2019. In certain instances, some Housing sub indicators were withdrawn entirely by NOAC during these years, whilst new sub indicators were developed. Issues with availability of data across all six years (2014-2019) is therefore limited to 9 of the 18 sub indicators. More importantly however, where data exists for the years between 2014 and 2019, only 4 of these sub indicators did not undergo some form of methodological change. **Results over the entire six years are therefore only comparable across 4 of 18 sub indicators.**

Notwithstanding methodological challenges, where data exists between 2014 and 2019 a number of trends are evident. Specifically, local government performance across social housing stock indicators has generally improved over the period of analysis. For instance, the number of dwellings directly added to local authorities housing stock, increased by 4,945 from 674 dwellings in 2014 to 5,619 in 2019. Moreover, the number of directly provided social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end also increased by 9,151 or 7% during these years (2014-19).

There has also been an improvement in the performance of Local Authorities in respect to the area of social housing vacancies between 2014 and 2019: with social housing vacancies decreasing from almost 4% in 2014 to 3% in 2019. In the context of social housing re-letting costs however, average costs across the sector increased by 59% between 2014 and 2019. Nonetheless, changes in methodology mid-way between the years 2014 and 2019 period of analysis means that it is somewhat difficult to determine the reliability of results for this sub indicator.

Sectoral improvements have been achieved in terms of an 10% reduction in average re-letting time of social housing dwellings during the years 2014 and 2019. Social housing maintenance costs across the sector also reduced by 8% between 2014-2019. Again however, it should be noted that methodological changes across both of these sub indicators during these years means that it is difficult to infer if this was due to local authority efficiencies or a change in methodologies that contributed to perceived performance improvements.

The number of registered tenancies across local government also increased by 14% during these years, with the corresponding number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities also increasing by 74% between 2014-2019. In this context, whilst data is only available between 2016-2018, the percentage of inspected dwellings that were non-compliant with Standards Regulations also increased by 8 percentage points, from 75% in 2014 to 83% in 2018.

Finally, in line with national homelessness statistics the percentage of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that were long-term homeless relative to the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation also increased by 15 percentage points between the years 2014 and 2019.

Owing to methodological inconsistencies across years, data over the six-year period was available for just over half of the sixteen sub indicators. This poses an issue in terms of assessing local authority performance over time relating to Housing. A more consistent methodological approach across indicators and sub indicators would maximise the impact these indicators have on tracking performance and assisting local authorities to build upon successes and address gaps.

4. Roads

4.1 Policy relevant to roads indicators

4.1.1 Road management

Ireland's road density is high by European comparison at 20.7 km per 1,000 inhabitants, making it the 6th highest density in the EU (more than twice the EU28 average of 9.6 km per 1,000 people and more than three times the road density in the UK at 6.4km per 1,000 inhabitants) (Government of Ireland, 2018d). Specifically, the National Roads Network totals 5,306km of road. It comprises 2,649km designated as National Primary Road and 2,657km designated as National Secondary Road. National Primary roads are numbered from M1 to M50, and National Secondary roads are numbered from N51 to N87. Contained within the national road network are the Motorway/Dual Carriageway sections totalling 1,210km (916km Motorway & 294km Dual Carriageway). Of which, 328km that are maintained under existing Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and 588km are maintained directly by the National Roads Authority through Motorway Maintenance and Renewals Contracts (MMaRC), with the remaining 294km maintained through local authorities (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, n.d.).

Outside of National Roads Networks, local authorities are responsible for operating, maintaining, and improving Regional Roads as well as Local Primary, Local Secondary and Local Tertiary Road Networks. In 2018, these roads accounted for approximately 96,000km of road networks nationally (National Oversight and Audit Commission, 2019). Road infrastructure is therefore the largest asset managed by local authorities, carrying approximately 55% of all traffic nationally (Roads Management Office, n.d.). These roads play a crucial role in Ireland because of dispersed populations and industrial development, the importance of tourism and agriculture in generating wealth

and employment and increasing attention on rural development and urban regeneration. It's efficient management (both day-to-day and in the long term) is critical to economic activity as the majority of commuting and haulage utilises the Regional and Local Road Network (Roads Management Office, n.d.).

In this context, a primary function of local authorities is to use public funds to provide a comfortable, safe, and economical road surface. This requires assessing priorities and making decisions in order to manage pavements. The management and frequent assessment of local pavement networks in a consistent, reliable, and standardised manner is important as a means of ensuring that road surfaces are efficiently administered.

Experience has shown that there are three useful steps in managing local roads:

- Inventory of all local roads.
- Periodically evaluate the condition of all pavements.
- Use the condition evaluations to set priorities for projects and select appropriate treatments.

To ensure consistency in road surface assessments, a formalised Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) technique has been utilised by the sector in recent years. A comprehensive pavement management system involves collecting data and assessing several road characteristics: roughness (ride), surface distress (condition), surface skid resistance and structure (pavement strength and deflection) (Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, 2013). PSCI ratings combined with other inventory data (width, length, shoulder, pavement type, etc.) can be very useful for local authorities in assessing priorities and in budgetary planning. This data can be combined with economic analysis to develop short-range and long-range plans for a variety of budgets (Department of Transport,

Tourism & Sport, 2013). PSCI ratings. The PSCI rating scale ranges from 10 for a pavement in excellent condition to 1 for a pavement in failed condition. PSCI rating scales are as follows:

- 1-4 (some to severe structural distress)
- 5-6 (surface defects, localised distress)
- 7-8 (surface defects)
- 9-10 (no defects or less than 10% defective)

Most pavements will deteriorate over time through the phases listed in the rating scale. The time taken to deteriorate from excellent condition (10) to complete failure (1) is largely dependent on the quality of the original construction and the amount of heavy traffic loading (Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, 2013).

4.1.2 Regional and Local Road Grants

The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is the statutory responsibility of local authorities in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act 1993 (Government of Ireland, 1993). Works on roads are funded from local authorities' own resources supplemented by State grants. Regional and local road grant funding in three main categories (Restoration Improvement, Discretionary Grant, and Restoration Maintenance) are allocated based on length of road network within a local authority area of responsibility. Local authorities can subsequently prioritise the allocation of these resources based on prevailing needs associated with their road infrastructure (Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, 2019).

4.1.3 Motor taxation

The DHLGH, DOT and local authorities all play significant roles in the administration and collection of motor tax nationally. Motor tax liability arises when a vehicle is used in a public place or on a public road. DTTAS provides online motor tax services and local authorities operate motor tax offices for payment of motor tax in person or by post. In 2015, local authorities incurred an average cost of around €10 for each motor tax payment transacted in person or by post, in contrast to DTTAS which incurred a cost of around €5 for its online

payment transactions. Moreover, the processing of payment applications accounts for almost 60% of motor tax office staff time in local authorities (Comptroller and Auditor General, 2016). Therefore, this highlights the significant administrative and cost savings for the State that arise from the promotion and use of online motor tax payment methods.

4.1.4 Conclusion

The role of local authorities in relation to Regional and Local Road infrastructure and motor tax transactions was detailed in Sections 4.1.1-4.1.3. It is in this context that Road's indicators measured through the annual NOAC Performance Indicators process examine the following:

- Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) Ratings
- Road works
- Online motor tax transactions

Details of specific indicators measured can be found in Table 4.1, with analysis provided in section 4.2. The roads sub-indicators have been subject to methodological changes between the years 2014 and 2019. Specifically, data across the entire 2014-2019 period is only available for 5 of 24 Roads sub indicators. With respect to those 5 sub indicators, methodologies remained consistent over the period for only 4 of the sub indicators. Where data exists over a six-year period, local authorities have largely demonstrated improvements in performance.

LEGEND KEY:

Consistent Methodology



Break in Methodology



No Data Collected

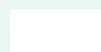


Table 4.1: Roads Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-19

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
R1 Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) Ratings						
Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary, (c) local secondary and (d) local tertiary roads that have ever received a PSCI rating		Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected
Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary and (c) local secondary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end and (d) local tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 60-month period prior to year-end		No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Percentage of regional roads that received a PSCI rating		Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected
Percentage of (a) regional road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Percentage of (b) local primary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Percentage of (c) local secondary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Percentage of (d) local tertiary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
R2 Road Works						
Kilometres of regional roads strengthened		Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Cost expended (€) on regional road strengthening		Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Kilometres of regional roads resealed		Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Cost expended (€) on regional road resealing		Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthened		No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthening		No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealed		No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealing		No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
R3 Percentage of Motor Tax Transactions Conducted Online						
Percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology

4.2 Roads related indicators

4.2.1 Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) Ratings

4.2.1.1 Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary, (c) local secondary and (d) local tertiary roads that have ever received a PSCI rating 2015-2016¹⁵

This is one of the two indicators that was in place for the first two years before being replaced. The data reported shows that between the years 2015 and 2016, there has been a general increase in the percentage of all road categories ever receiving a PSCI rating as shown in Table 4.2. The percentage of regional roads that ever received a PSCI rating increased from 68% in 2015 to 99% in 2016. Local primary roads receiving a PSCI rating increased from 88% in 2015 to 95% in 2016, while the proportion of local secondary roads receiving a PSCI increased by 14 percentage points, from 79% in 2015 to 93% in 2016. The percentage of local tertiary roads that ever received a PSCI rating also increased between these years from 58% in 2015 to 72% in 2016 (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary, (c) local secondary and (d) local tertiary roads that have ever received a PSCI rating 2015-2016

Indicator – Percentage of:	2015	2016
(a) regional roads that ever received a PSCI rating	68	99
(b) local primary roads that ever received a PSCI rating	88	95
(c) local secondary roads that ever-received PSCI rating	79	93
(d) local tertiary roads that ever received a PSCI rating	58	72

¹⁵ NOAC Guidance Notes
2015-2016 Median national values used for both years.

¹⁶ NOAC Guidance Notes
2017-2019 Median national values used for both years.

4.2.1.2 Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary, and (c) local secondary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end and (d) local tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 60-month period prior to year-end 2017-2019¹⁶

This indicator looks for more specific data in relation to when PSCI ratings were issued. The data shows that the percentage of regional roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end increased marginally, from 96% of regional roads in 2017 to 99% in 2019. The proportion of primary roads that received a PSCI rating within a 24-month period to year end increased by four percentage points from 92% in 2017 to 96% in 2018, before decreasing again to 92% in 2019. Between the years 2017 and 2019, the percentage of local secondary roads receiving a PSCI rating within a 24-month period rose by 12 percentage points: increasing from 66% in 2017 to 88% in 2019. The percentage of local tertiary roads receiving a PSCI rating within a 60-month period prior to year-end increased from 80% in 2017 to 84% in 2019 (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary, (c) local secondary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end and (d) local tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 60-month period prior to year-end 2017-2019

Indicator – Percentage of:	2017	2018	2019
(a) regional road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end	96	100	99
(b) local primary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end	92	96	92
(c) local secondary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end	66	89	88
(d) local tertiary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 60-month period prior to year-end	80	81	84

4.2.1.3 Percentage of regional roads that received a PSCI rating 2015-2016¹⁷

This data was only gathered for two years before being discontinued and more detailed indicators put in place. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of regional roads that received a PSCI rating, between the years 2015-16. In 2016, the proportion of regional roads that received a PSCI condition rating increased to 81% in 2016: representing an increase of 33 percentage points from 48% in 2015.

4.2.1.4 Percentage of (a) regional roads in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019¹⁸

The percentage of regional road with a PSCI rating of 1-4 decreased from 7% in 2014 to 2% in 2015, before increasing again to 6% in 2019. The proportion of regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 decreased from 16% in 2014 to 9% in 2015. Since then, the percentage of regional roads with a 5-6 rating increased to 24% in 2018, before decreasing to 21% in 2019. Regional roads with a PSCI rating of 7-8 decreased from 42% in 2014 to 23% in 2015, before increasing again to 42% in 2016. Between 2016 and 2019, the proportion of roads with a 7-9 PSCI rating has decreased by 11 percentage points to 31% in 2019. The percentage of regional roads with a PSCI rating of 9-10 rose substantially from 20% in 2014 to 40% in 2019: representing an increase of 20 percentage points (Table 4.4).

Figure 4.1: Percentage of regional road kilometres that received a PSCI rating 2015-2016



Table 4.4: Percentage of (a) regional road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019

Indicator – Percentage of (a) regional road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
% of regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1-4 at year-end	7	2	4	4	7	6
% of regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5-6 at year-end	16	9	19	18	24	21
% of regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7-8 at year-end	42	23	42	41	31	31
% of regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9-10 at year-end	20	20	30	28	39	40

¹⁷ NOAC Guidance Notes
2015-2016 - Median national values used for both years.

¹⁸ NOAC Guidance Notes
2014-2019 - Median national values used for all years.

4.2.1.5 Percentage of (b) local primary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019¹⁹

The percentage of local primary road with a PSCI rating of 1-4 increased from 7% in 2014 to 9% in 2016, following which the figure decreased to 7% in 2019. Local primary roads with a PSCI rating of 5-6 increased from 24% in 2014 to 25% in 2017, before decreasing slightly to 24% in 2019. The proportion of local roads with a PSCI rating of 7-8 decreased from 36% in 2014 to 31% in 2016, but then subsequently increased to 43% in 2019. Local primary roads with a 9-10 PSCI rating rose annually between 2014 and 2018, from 10% in 2014 to 23% in 2018, before a marginal decrease to 21% in 2019 (Table 4.5).

4.2.1.6 Percentage of (c) local secondary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019²⁰

The percentage of local secondary road with a PSCI rating of 1-4 decreased from 15% in 2014 to 8% in 2015, following which the figure increased to 12% in 2019. Local secondary roads with a 5-6 PSCI rating decreased from 30% in 2014 to 24% in 2015, before subsequently increasing to 27% in 2019. The proportion of local secondary roads with a 7-8 PSCI rating decreased from 32% in 2014 to 24% in 2015, before increasing annually to 36% in 2019. Local secondary roads with a 9-10 PSCI rating increased from 6% in 2014 to 16% in 2019 (Table 4.6).

Table 4.5: Percentage of (b) local primary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019

Indicator – Percentage of (b) local primary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014 – 2019	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
% of local primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1-4 at year-end	7	7	9	7	7	7
% of local primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5-6 at year-end	24	21	24	25	23	24
% of local primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7-8 at year-end	36	34	31	36	39	43
% of local primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9-10 at year-end	10	11	13	20	23	21

Table 4.6: Percentage of (c) local secondary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019

Indicator – Percentage of (c) local secondary road Kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
% of local secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1-4 at year-end	15	8	10	10	13	12
% of local secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5-6 at year-end	30	24	26	26	27	27
% of local secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7-8 at year-end	32	24	28	32	36	36
% of local secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9-10 at year-end	6	8	10	14	14	16

¹⁹ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2019 - Median national values used for all years.

²⁰ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2019 - Median national values used for all years.

4.2.1.7 Percentage of (d) local tertiary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019 ²¹

The percentage of local tertiary road with a PSCI rating of 1-4 decreased from 29% in 2014 to 14% in 2015, before increasing to 18% in 2019. Local tertiary roads with a 5-6 PSCI rating fell from 24% in 2014 to 14% in 2015. Since then, the proportion of local tertiary roads with a PSCI rating of 5-6 increased by six percentage points to 20% in 2019. Local tertiary roads with a PSCI rating of 7-8 decreased from 24% in 2014 to 15% in 2015. Between the years 2015 and 2019, the percentage of local tertiary roads with a 7-8 PSCI rating increased by 10 percentage points to 25% in 2019. The percentage of local tertiary road with a PSCI rating of 9-10 decreased from 7% in 2014 to 5% in 2015, before increasing annually to 14% in 2019 (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Percentage of (d) local tertiary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019

Percentage of (d) local tertiary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories 2014-2019	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
% of local tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1-4 at year-end	29	14	17	15	19	18
% of local tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5-6 at year-end	24	14	20	21	20	20
% of local tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7-8 at year-end	24	15	17	20	21	25
% of local tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9-10 at year-end	7	5	7	8	12	14

²¹NOAC Guidance Notes
2014-2019

• Median national values used for all years.

4.2.2 Regional Road Strengthening

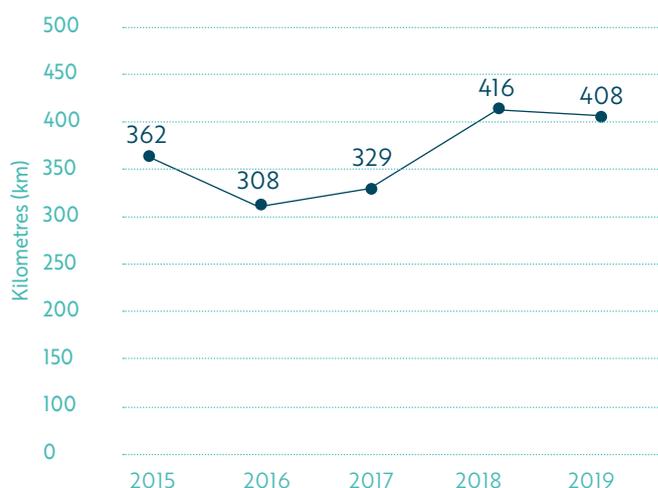
4.2.2.1 Kilometres of regional roads strengthened 2015-2019²²

This data was not reported in 2014, data collection for this sub indicator commenced in 2015. Figure 4.2 shows the number of kilometres of regional roads strengthened between the years 2015 and 2019. In 2019, the total kilometres of regional roads strengthened amounted to 408: representing an overall increase of 46 kilometres or almost 13% nationally from 362 kilometres in 2015. While the total kilometres of regional roads strengthened decreased from 362km in 2015 to 308 km in 2016, it subsequently increased to 416 km in 2018. Since 2018, there as slight decrease in the total kilometre of regional roads strengthened at 408km in 2019. Overall, Local Authorities strengthened a total of 1,823km of regional roads throughout the five years.

4.2.2.2 Cost expended (€) on regional road strengthening 2015-2019²³

Similarly to the previous indicator, data collection for the following sub-indicator commenced in 2015. The cost expended on regional road strengthening works nationally increased between the years 2015 and 2019. In 2019, total expenditure on regional road strengthening amounted to over €90.5 million: increasing by €42.4 million or 88% from just over €48 million in 2015. Between the years 2015 and 2016, the total expenditure on regional road strengthening decreased from €48.1 million in 2015 to €45 million in 2016 (-€3.1m). Since then, the total expenditure on regional roads strengthening increased annually to over €90.5 million in 2019. In total, Local authorities have spent €306.4 million in the strengthening of regional roads throughout the five years (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2: Kilometres of regional roads strengthened 2015-2019



While the data presented here reflects activity over a five-year period, there was however a significant break in methodology in 2017. Therefore, Figure 4.4 below more accurately reflects the activity over the period.

Figure 4.3: Cost expended (€) on regional road strengthening 2015-2019



While the data presented here reflects activity over a five-year period, there was however a significant break in methodology in 2017. Therefore, Figure 4.5 below more accurately reflects the activity over the period.

²²NOAC Guidance Notes 2015-2019

• Strengthened is the application of a structural overlay that strengthens the existing pavement and adds to its residual structural life, or an inlay in which damaged layers of the pavement are removed and replaced to improve the functional performance and, potentially, the structural performance. For the purpose of these performance indicators, it also includes road reconstruction.

2015-2016 - Only roads which used road improvement grants and road maintenance grants are included.

2017-2019 - Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

²³NOAC Guidance Notes 2015-2019

• Strengthening is the application of a structural overlay that strengthens the existing pavement and adds to its residual structural life, or an inlay in which damaged layers of the pavement are removed and replaced to improve the functional performance and, potentially, the structural performance. For the purpose of these performance indicators, it also includes road reconstruction.

2015-2016 - Only roads which used road improvement grants and road maintenance grants are included.

2017-2019 - Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

4.2.2.3 Kilometres of regional roads strengthened 2017-2019 ²⁴

The number of kilometres of regional roads strengthened nationally increased between 2017 and 2019. In 2017, 329 km of regional roads were strengthened nationally. This figure subsequently increased to 416 km in 2018, before a slight decrease to 408 km in 2019. During these years, the total number of kilometres of regional roads strengthened has increased by 72 km or 24% from 329 km in 2017 to 408 km in 2019. Local authorities strengthened a total of 1,153 km of regional roads throughout the three years (Figure 4.4).

4.2.2.4 Cost expended (€) on regional road strengthening 2017-2019 ²⁵

The cost expended on regional road strengthening works nationally increased between 2017 and 2019. In 2017, €52.7 million was spent on regional road strengthening nationally. This figure subsequently increased to €90.5 million in 2019. This represents an increase of €37.8 million or 72% increase on regional road strengthening expenditure nationally between 2017 and 2019. Local authorities spent €213.3 million on strengthening regional roads throughout the three years (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.4: Kilometres of regional roads strengthened 2017-19

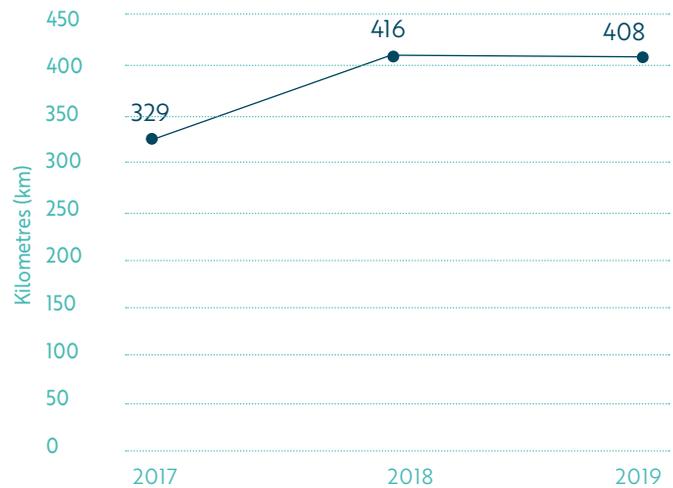


Figure 4.5: Cost expended (€) on regional road strengthening 2017-19



²⁴ NOAC Guidance Notes 2017-2019

- Strengthened is the application of a structural overlay that strengthens the existing pavement and adds to its residual structural life, or an inlay in which damaged layers of the pavement are removed and replaced to improve the functional performance and, potentially, the structural performance. For the purpose of these performance indicators, it also includes road reconstruction.
- Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

²⁵ NOAC Guidance Notes 2017-2019

- Strengthening is the application of a structural overlay that strengthens the existing pavement and adds to its residual structural life, or an inlay in which damaged layers of the pavement are removed and replaced to improve the functional performance and, potentially, the structural performance. For the purpose of these performance indicators, it also includes road reconstruction.
- Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

4.2.2.5 Kilometres of regional roads resealed 2015-2019²⁶

This indicator was introduced in 2015 and the data illustrated below show that the number of kilometres of regional roads resealed increased annually between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, Local Authorities resealed 442 kilometres of regional roads: representing an increase of 92 kilometres or 26% from the 350 kilometres of regional roads resealed in 2015. In total, Local Authorities have resealed 1,921 km of regional roads throughout the five years (Figure 4.6).

While the data presented here reflects activity over a five-year period, there was however a significant break in methodology in 2017. Therefore, Figure 4.8 below more accurately reflects the activity over the period.

4.2.2.6 Cost expended (€) on regional road resealing 2015-2019²⁷

Figures relating to expenditure began being reported in 2015. The cost expended on regional road resealing works nationally increased between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, total expenditure on regional road resealing amounted to €14.5 million: representing an increase of almost €3.2 million or 28% from €11.3million in 2015. While total expenditure decreased to €11.2 million in 2016, it subsequently increased annually to €14.5 million in 2019. In total, Local Authorities spent €61.6m on resealing regional roads throughout the five years (Figure 4.7).

While the data presented here reflects activity over a five-year period, there was however a significant break in methodology in 2017. Therefore, Figure 4.9 below more accurately reflects the activity over the period.

Figure 4.6: Kilometres of regional roads resealed 2015-19



Figure 4.7: Cost expended (€) on regional road resealing 2015-19



²⁶ NOAC Guidance Notes 2015-2019

- Resealed refers to the use of thin surfacings (e.g., surface dressing) that rejuvenates the pavement surface, increases skid resistance, macro-texture and seal cracks.

2015-2016

- Only roads which used road improvement grants and road maintenance grants are included.

2017-2019

- Figures relate to all resealing works regardless of the funding source.

²⁷ NOAC Guidance Notes

2015-2019

- Resealing refers to the use of thin surfacings (e.g., surface dressing) that rejuvenates the pavement surface, increases skid resistance, macro-texture and seal cracks.

2015-2016

- Only roads which used road improvement grants and road maintenance grants are included.

2017-2019

- Figures relate to all resealing works regardless of the funding source.

4.2.2.7 Kilometres of regional roads resealed 2017-2019 ²⁸

The number of kilometres of regional roads resealed increased between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, local authorities resealed 442 km of regional roads: an increase of 62km or 16.3% of regional roads resealed from 380km in 2015. Local authorities resealed a total of 1,220 km of regional roads throughout the three years (Figure 4.8).

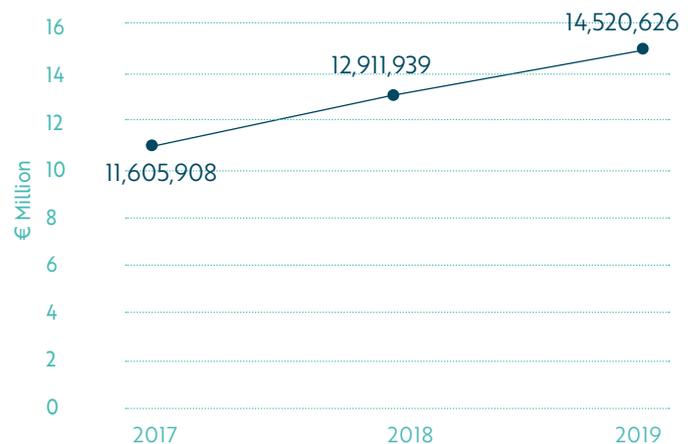
4.2.2.8 Cost expended (€) on regional road resealing 2017-2019 ²⁹

The cost expended on regional road resealing works nationally increased between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, total expenditure on regional road resealing amounted to €14.5 million: representing an increase of €2.9 million or 25% from €11.6 million in 2017. Total expenditure by Local Authorities on resealing regional roads amounted to just over €39 million across the three years, 2017-19 (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.8: Kilometres of regional roads resealed 2017-19



Figure 4.9: Cost expended (€) on regional road resealing 2017-19



²⁸ **NOAC Guidance Notes**
2017-2019

- Resealed refers to the use of thin surfacings (e.g., surface dressing) that rejuvenates the pavement surface, increases skid resistance, macro-texture and seal cracks.
- Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

²⁹ **NOAC Guidance Notes**
2017-2019

- Resealing refers to the use of thin surfacings (e.g., surface dressing) that rejuvenates the pavement surface, increases skid resistance, macro-texture and seal cracks.
- Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

4.2.2.9 Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthened 2016-2019³⁰

Data collection commenced in 2016 for this sub indicator. The data reveals that in 2019, local authorities strengthened 2,015 kilometres of local roads: representing an overall increase of 587km or 41% from the 1,428 km of local roads strengthened in 2016. During these years (2016-19), the total number of kilometres of local roads strengthened increased from 1,428 in 2016 to 2,216 in 2018, but then decreased to 2,015km in 2019 (Figure 4.10).

While the data presented here reflects activity over a five-year period, there was however a significant break in methodology in 2017. Therefore, Figure 4.12 below more accurately reflects the activity over the period.

4.2.2.10 Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthening 2016-2019³¹

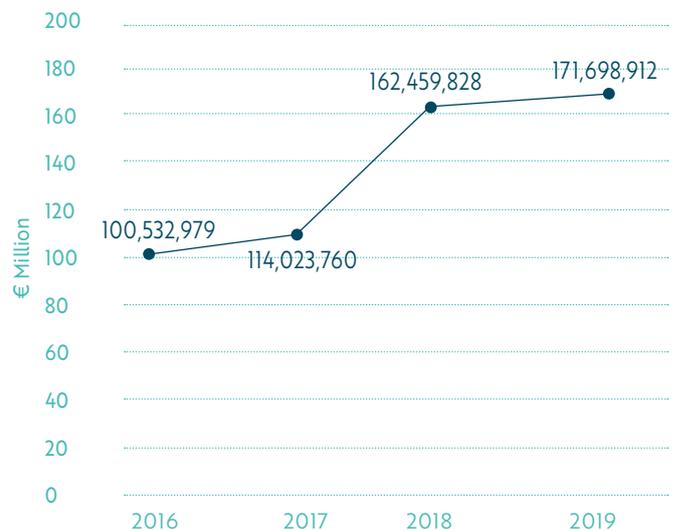
Once again, data collection for this indicator began in 2016. The cost expended on local road strengthening works nationally increased annually between 2016 and 2019. In 2019, the total expenditure on local road strengthening amounted to €171.7 million. This represents an increase of almost €71.2 million or 71% from €100.5 million in 2016. Overall, Local Authorities have spent €548.7 million in strengthening local roads throughout the four years (Figure 4.11).

While the data presented here reflects activity over a five-year period, there was however a significant break in methodology in 2017. Therefore, Figure 4.13 below more accurately reflects the activity over the period.

Figure 4.10: Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthened 2016-19



Figure 4.11: Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthening 2016-19



³⁰ NOAC Guidance Notes

2016-2019

• Strengthened is the application of a structural overlay that strengthens the existing pavement and adds to its residual structural life, or an inlay in which damaged layers of the pavement are removed and replaced to improve the functional performance and, potentially, the structural performance. For the purpose of these performance indicators, it also includes road reconstruction.

2016

• Only roads which used road improvement grants and road maintenance grants are included.

• As Dublin City, South Dublin, Fingal and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Councils do not receive funding under the main grant programmes from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, they are requested to report instead on works funded through their own resources.

2017-2019 - Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

³¹ NOAC Guidance Notes

2016-2019

• Strengthening is the application of a structural overlay that strengthens the existing pavement and adds to its residual structural life, or an inlay in which damaged layers of the pavement are removed and replaced to improve the functional performance and, potentially, the structural performance. For the purpose of these performance indicators, it also includes road reconstruction.

2016

• Only roads which used road improvement grants and road maintenance grants are included.

• As Dublin City, South Dublin, Fingal and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Councils do not receive funding under the main grant programmes from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, they are requested to report instead on works funded through their own resources.

2017-2019 - Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

4.2.2.11 Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthened 2017-2019 ³²

In 2019, the total number of kilometres of local roads strengthened amounted to 2,015km: representing an overall increase of 458km or 29% from 1,556km in 2017. During these years (2017-19), the total number of kilometres of roads strengthened by Local Authorities increased from 1,557km in 2017 to 2,216, but then decreased to 2,015km in 2019. Local authorities strengthened a total of 5,788km of local roads throughout the three years (Figure 4.12).

4.2.2.12 Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthening 2017-2019 ³³

The cost expended on local road strengthening works nationally increased between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, the total expenditure on local road strengthening amounted to almost €171.7m: representing an increase of almost €57.7m or 51% from €114m in 2015. Local authorities spent almost €448.2m in strengthening local roads throughout the three years (2017-19).

Figure 4.12: Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary and tertiary) strengthened 2017-19

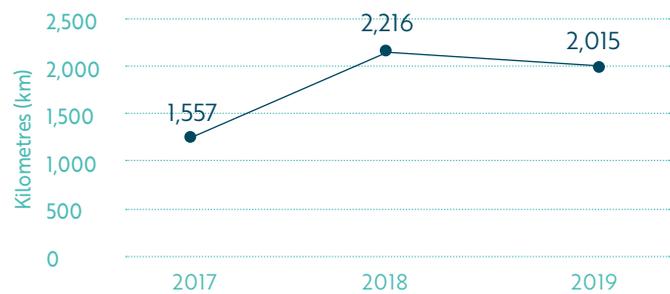


Figure 4.13: Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthening 2017-19



³² NOAC Guidance Notes 2017-2019

- Strengthened is the application of a structural overlay that strengthens the existing pavement and adds to its residual structural life, or an inlay in which damaged layers of the pavement are removed and replaced to improve the functional performance and, potentially, the structural performance. For the purpose of these performance indicators, it also includes road reconstruction.
- Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

³³ NOAC Guidance Notes 2017-2019

- Strengthening is the application of a structural overlay that strengthens the existing pavement and adds to its residual structural life, or an inlay in which damaged layers of the pavement are removed and replaced to improve the functional performance and, potentially, the structural performance. For the purpose of these performance indicators, it also includes road reconstruction.
- Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

4.2.2.13 Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealed 2016-2019³⁴

The number of kilometres of local roads resealed increased between 2016 and 2019. In 2019, Local Authorities resealed 2,119 km of local roads: an increase of 400km or 23% from the 1,719km of local roads resealed in 2016. Local authorities resealed a total of 7,572 km of local roads throughout the four years (Figure 4.14).

4.2.2.14 Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealing 2016-2019³⁵

The cost expended on local road resealing works nationally increased between 2016 and 2019. During these years, total expenditure on local road resealing rose from over €29.3 million in 2016 to almost €41.1 million in 2019. This represents an increase of €11.8 million or 40% on 2016. Local authorities spent €139.4 million resealing local roads throughout the four years (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.14: Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealed 2016-19



Figure 4.15: Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealing 2016-19



³⁴ NOAC Guidance Notes

2016-2019

- Resealed refers to the use of thin surfacings (e.g., surface dressing) that rejuvenates the pavement surface, increases skid resistance, macro-texture and seal cracks.

2016

- Only roads which used road improvement grants and road maintenance grants are included.

2017-2019

- Figures relate to all resealing works regardless of the funding source.

³⁵ NOAC Guidance Notes

2016-2019

- Resealing refers to the use of thin surfacings (e.g., surface dressing) that rejuvenates the pavement surface, increases skid resistance, macro-texture and seal cracks.

2016

- Only roads which used road improvement grants and road maintenance grants are included.

2017-2019

- Figures relate to all resealing works regardless of the funding source.

4.2.2.15 Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealed 2017-2019³⁶

The number of kilometres of local roads resealed increased between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, Local Authorities resealed 2,119km of local roads. This represents an increase of 351 km or almost 20% from the 1,768km of local roads resealed in 2017. Local Authorities resealed a total of 5,853km of local roads throughout the three years (Figure 4.16).

4.2.2.16 Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealing 2017-2019³⁷

The cost expended on local road resealing works nationally increased between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, expenditure on local road resealing amounted to almost €41.1 million: increasing by over €9.2 million or 29% from almost €31.9 million spent on resealing local roads in 2017. Local authorities spent €110 million resealing local roads throughout the three years (Figure 4.17).

Figure 4.16: Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary and tertiary) resealed 2017-19

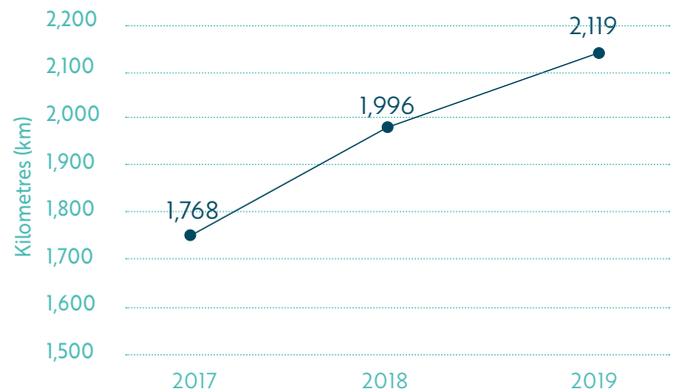


Figure 4.17: Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary and tertiary) resealing 2017-19



³⁶ **NOAC Guidance Notes**
2017-2019

- Resealed refers to the use of thin surfacings (e.g., surface dressing) that rejuvenates the pavement surface, increases skid resistance, macro-texture and seal cracks.
- Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

³⁷ **NOAC Guidance Notes**
2017-2019

- Resealing refers to the use of thin surfacings (e.g., surface dressing) that rejuvenates the pavement surface, increases skid resistance, macro-texture and seal cracks.
- Figures relate to all strengthening works regardless of the funding source.

4.2.3 Percentage of Motor Tax Transactions Conducted Online

4.2.3.1 Percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online 2014-2019 ³⁸

The percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online increased annually between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 77% of motor tax transactions were dealt with online. This represents an increase of 19 percentage points on the 58% of motor tax transactions that were dealt with in 2014 (Figure 4.18).

Figure 4.18: Percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online 2014-19



³⁸ **NOAC Guidance Notes**

2014-2015

- Online motor tax transactions calculated as a percentage of all payment transactions (including Trade Plates, arrears and replacement Vehicle Registration Certificates). Figures were therefore understated in these years.

2016-2019

- Indicator based on percentage of online motor tax transactions calculated based on all motor tax transactions including exempt tax discs for all transaction types
- Data not directly comparable with previous years (National Oversight and Audit Commission, 2018b).

4.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, Road's sub indicators have been subject to significant changes in methodologies between 2014-2019. Specifically, data across the entire 2014-2019 period is only available for 5 of 24 Roads sub indicators. With respect to those 5 sub indicators, methodologies remained consistent over the period for only 4 of the sub indicators. Where data exists over a six-year period, local authorities have largely demonstrated improvements in performance.

Specifically, in terms of PSCI ratings the quality of regional, local primary, local secondary and local tertiary roads generally improved nationally between 2014-2019. Moreover, between 2015-2019 number of kilometres of regional road both strengthened and resealed increased by 13% and 26% respectively. Similarly, the cost expended on regional road strengthening and resealing also increased by 88% and 28% respectively during the same period. It should be noted however, that due to methodological changes in how this was reported between 2015-2019, data for 2015-2016 includes only those roads strengthened and resealed utilising road improvement and road maintenance grants, whilst figures for 2017-2019 included all strengthening and resealing works regardless of funding sources.

During the years 2016-2019 the number of kilometres of local roads (i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary roads) both strengthened and resealed increased by 41% and 23% respectively. The cost expended on local road strengthening and resealing also increased by 71% and 40% respectively between 2016-2019. Methodological changes in how this was reported between 2016-2019 also changed however, with data for 2016 including only those roads strengthened using road improvement and road maintenance grants, with figures for 2017-2019 capturing all strengthening and resealing works regardless of funding sources.

Finally, the percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online increased by 19 percentage points between 2014-2019, from 58% in 2014 to 77% in 2019. However, methodological changes occurred to the indicator from 2016 onwards. This has meant that the data available prior to 2016 (2014-15) is not comparable to recent data.

The issue of methodological inconsistencies across years makes comparison difficult for many Roads sub indicators. For instance, full data between 2014-2019 only exists for approximately 25% of all Roads sub indicators. Indeed, even where data is available over a five-year period (2015-2019), changes in methodologies mid-way through the period means that it is difficult to infer specific trends with data. Notwithstanding methodological challenges, taken more broadly the results demonstrate general overall improvement across Road's sub indicators at a sectoral level.



5. Water

5.1 Policy relevant to water indicators

5.1.1 Private water supplies

Broadly denoted, water supplies can be grouped into two distinct categories. Firstly, public water supplies are those supplies operated directly by Irish Water through a public water scheme. Secondly, there are also private water supplies which are those that are not operated by Irish Water. Private supplies are mostly situated in rural areas and provide drinking water to individuals who are not connected to the public water mains (approximately 20% of the population). In this context, EU Drinking Water Regulations dictate that certain private supplies are to be managed and regulated directly by individual local authorities (Government of Ireland, 2014d).

Annually, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees local authorities' monitoring of regulated private water supplies, with results consistently demonstrating that the quality of water in private supplies is not as satisfactory as water quality in publicly-sourced supplies (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020c). The EPA has limited responsibility for regulated private water supply schemes.

As part of the local authorities' regulatory role of private water supplies, they are required under the EU Drinking Water Regulation, 2014 to audit certain private drinking water supplies and ensure that a water supply owner acts to improve their water supply – in the event of water quality not adhering to the standards contained in the EU Regulations (Government of Ireland, 2014d). The remit of Local Authorities in the regulation of water supply includes the following:

- 1. Public Group Schemes:** where a group water scheme, set up by a local community, manages the distribution of treated water to users. Whilst Irish Water manage the abstraction and treatment of the water, local authorities are responsible for regulating and monitoring such schemes.
- 2. Private Group Schemes:** where a group water scheme, set up by a local community, manages the abstraction, treatment, and distribution of treated water. They are generally supplied by springs or wells. There are just under 400 private group schemes serving nearly 200,000 people. A quarter of these schemes are supplied by surface water (rivers, lakes, or streams) and nearly three-quarters are supplied by wells or springs.
- 3. Small Private Supplies:** are schemes that serve a commercial or public entity such as hotels, pubs and restaurants, crèches, and national schools. The owner or manager of the activity manages the abstraction, treatment, and delivery of the water. Smaller private water supplies are also mostly sourced from wells. There are over 1,700 small private supplies registered with local authorities. However, it is difficult to quantify how many people use these supplies as they often provide water to employees, customers, and service users of these premises.

Whilst private water supplies only provide 20% of the population with water nationally, many more individuals may be exposed to water from such supplies when visiting friends, family, restaurants, or other premises that rely on this from of private water supply. Within this policy context, Local Authorities have a significant role in the maintaining of public health nationally, through the effective monitoring and regulation of private water supplies.

5.1.2 Conclusion

The role of local authorities in relation to monitoring and regulating private water supplies nationally was outlined in Section 5.1. Consequently, Water indicators measured through the annual NOAC Performance Indicators process examine the following:

- Drinking water compliance in private water supplies

Details of the specific indicator measured can be found in Table 5.1, with analysis provided in Section 5.2. The data for this indicator is comparable across all five years collected, from 2015 to 2019.

Table 5.1: Water Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-2019

LEGEND KEY:		Consistent Methodology		No Data Collected			
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
WI	Drinking Water in Private Schemes in Compliance with Statutory Requirements						
	Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements						

5.2 Water related indicator

5.2.1 Drinking Water in Private Schemes in Compliance with Statutory Requirements

5.2.1.1 Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements 2015-2019

Collection of data began in 2015 and there has been no change to the guidelines in relation to the data gathered each year. The data reveals that the percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements remained almost static between 2015-2019. In 2015, almost 98% of drinking water in private schemes was compliant with statutory requirements, decreasing to 97.5% in 2019. This represents a 0.5 percentage point decrease in the percentage of drinking water in private schemes that are compliant with statutory requirements between 2014 and 2019 (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements, 2015-19



5.3 Summary

Private water supplies provide almost 20% of Ireland's population with water, including through public group schemes, private group schemes and small private supplies (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020c). However, additional members of the public may be exposed to water from such supplies when visiting friends, family, restaurants, or other premises that rely on water from a private supply. In this regard, water quality in regulated private water supplies is consistently poorer than public water supplies. For instance, whilst NOAC Performance Indicators related to Water are solely limited to assessing drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements, overall local authorities' performance deteriorated slightly between 2015-2019, from almost 98% in 2015 to 97.5% in 2019. This compares with almost 100% compliance with water quality standards in public water supplies during the same period (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020a). Given the differences in water quality between public and private water supplies, local authorities will need to work towards improving private water supply quality nationally in the coming years through effective monitoring and regulation if public health is maintained.



6. Waste/Environment

6.1 Policy relevant to waste/environment indicators

6.1.1 Waste collection - 3-bin service

Under the Waste Management Act 1996, all local authorities are responsible for ensuring the collection of household waste in their area (Government of Ireland, 1996). In addition, they must provide or organise for the provision of facilities for the disposal and recovery of household waste. Nationally, household waste is usually collected once weekly, generally by a private licenced operator. Generally, different types of waste must be separated into colour-coded containers for collection which include recyclable items and residual (non-recyclable) waste.

Since 2013, additional regulations have been introduced, which includes the European Union (Household Food Waste and Bio-waste) Regulations 2015, that deals specifically with the disposal of food waste and bio-waste. On a phased basis, brown bins were introduced to manage compostable waste – starting with the largest population centres and extending each year to smaller centres of population (Government of Ireland, 2015). With effect from 2017, these bins have been being rolled out to population centres with >500 residents. However, there remains no statutory responsibility to provide a brown bin service in very small population areas and on small islands (<500 residents) as it is deemed impractical to collect food waste separately to other waste collection services in these areas (Government of Ireland, 2015). To facilitate greater recycling of compostable waste and compliance with EU regulations, brown bins collection services are offered by many waste providers nationally to facilitate the disposal of food and bio-waste in those population centres that can avail of such a collection service. Within the food and bio-waste service domain, local authorities ensure that waste collection providers service areas where

the population exceed 500 people – to which the Regulations apply.

6.1.2 Environment pollution complaints

Local authorities have significant powers under environmental legislation which enable them to address environmental complaints. Specifically, they are responsible for over 500 environmental protection requirements contained within 100 pieces of legislation intended to protect public health and the environment.

This regulatory remit includes:

- Enforcing environmental licences/permits
 - Conducting site inspections
 - Handling environmental complaints and undertaking environmental enforcement actions
 - Issuing environmental prosecutions
- (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020b).

Annually, local authorities develop enforcement plans to allocate resources where they are needed most. Actions are subsequently implemented based on the risk posed to the environment and what is deemed a priority locally or nationally.

Whilst local authorities are responsible for environmental enforcement and regulation, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as the national policy regulator in this area, is responsible for overseeing the work of LAs in exercising their environmental protection regulatory function. Each year, local authorities inform the EPA of their enforcement plans and their planned levels of activity, in addition to submitting data on completed activities and information on significant achievements. A key area of this annual process for local authorities includes reporting environmental complaints regarding waste, litter, water, noise, and air pollution (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020b). This annual reporting process ensures

that local authorities are successfully addressing issues of environmental pollution in their administrative areas.

6.1.3 Litter Pollution

The Litter Pollution Acts 1997 to 2009 provide the statutory framework to combat littering nationally. Under these Acts, local authorities are designated as the primary management and enforcement bodies responsible dealing with litter nationally. It is a matter for each authority to investigate individual instances of littering and to take appropriate enforcement and clean up actions (Government of Ireland, 1997a).

To assist local authorities with monitoring and reducing litter pollution in their areas, a Litter Pollution Monitoring System is utilised to provide an accurate picture of litter pollution nationally and accurately measure changes over time. Under the system, local authorities conduct surveys annually – a minimum of between some 30-600 surveys depending on population size - to determine the extent, composition and causes of litter pollution in their administrative areas. The data derived from these studies facilitates local authorities to engage in: effective litter management planning within their areas; examining the impact of their litter management strategies and ensuring the optimum allocation of their resources to address litter pollution. Using appropriate software mapping tools, litter pollution survey results in each local authority area are subsequently expressed as a litter pollution index for the areas surveyed, ranging in value from 1 to 5, as follows:

1. Unpolluted i.e., litter free,
2. Slightly polluted,
3. Moderately polluted,
4. Significantly polluted, and
5. Grossly polluted i.e., level of litter expected after a major sporting or entertainment event.

The results provide an important annual measurement for local authorities in assessing litter pollution over time and in supporting local authorities to develop appropriate intervention strategies where litter pollution poses an environmental problem.

6.1.4 Green Flag for schools

Most young people are aware of environmental issues and wish to make a positive impact to the environment around them. An important aspect of integrating environmental issues into young peoples' lives is through the formal education system. Promoting whole-school action for the environment, Green Schools is a student-led programme with involvement from the wider community. Green-Schools, known internationally as Eco-Schools, is co-ordinated by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), and currently operates in 62 countries with over 16 million students involved in the programme. An Taisce, as the FEE member for Ireland, co-ordinates the programme nationally. The Green Schools programme is therefore an international environmental education and accreditation programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for schools to implement environmental issues from the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of their school. Green Schools covers nine different themes which include:

- Litter and Waste minimisation
- Energy
- Water
- Travel
- Biodiversity
- Global Citizenship – Litter & Waste
- Global Citizenship – Energy
- Global Citizenship – Marine Environment
- Global Citizenship – Travel

Local authorities are an important stakeholder in this programme nationally, through both the provision of funding for the programme and offering on the ground support for schools through their Environmental Education and Awareness Officers. This partnership with An Taisce is seen as the key to the success of the Green Schools programme and in encouraging schools to work towards the attainment of Green Flags across each of the nine themes.

6.1.5 Conclusion

Sections 6.1.1-6.1.4 outlined current national policy in relation to local authority waste and environmental service provision. In this context, the following Waste/Environment topics are measured by NOAC annually as part of its Performance Indicators process:

- Waste collection – 3-bin service
- Environmental pollution complaints
- Litter pollution complaints
- Green Flag for schools

Specific details of Performance Indicators related to the above Waste and Environment topics can be found in Table 6.1, with analysis provided in section 6.2. The methodologies for Waste/Environment sub indicators have remained relatively consistent between 2014-19. Specifically, of the Waste/Environment areas data is available for 5 of 7 sub indicators, with all 5 sub indicators comparable during these years due to the use of a consistent methodological approach.

Table 6.1: Waste/Environment Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:		Consistent Methodology		No Data Collected			
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
E1	Number/Percentage of Households Availing of a 3-Bin Service						
	Number of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end						
	Percentage of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end						
E2	Environmental Pollution Complaints						
	Number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made						
	Number of pollution cases closed						
	Number of pollution cases on hand at year-end						
E3	Percentage of Local Authority Areas Within the 5 Levels of Litter Pollution						
	Percentage of area within local authorities that when surveyed was (1) unpolluted or litter free, (2) slightly polluted, (3) moderately polluted, (4) significantly polluted and (5) grossly polluted						
E4	Green Flags for Schools						
	Percentage of schools awarded Green Flag status						

6.2 Waste/Environment related indicators

6.2.1 Number/Percentage of Households Availing of a 3-Bin Service

6.2.1.1 Number of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end 2014-19³⁹

The number of households which were situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at the end of the year increased annually between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, just over 821,000 households were situated in an area covered by a licensed operator. This represents an increase of almost 299,000 or 57% from 522,000 households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service in 2015 (Figure 6.1).

6.2.1.2 Percentage of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end 2014-2019⁴⁰

The percentage of households nationally which were situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end increased annually between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 48% of households nationally were situated in an area serviced by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service: representing a 16-percentage point increase from 32% of households nationally situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service in 2014 (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.1: Number of households situated in an area covered by licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end 2014-19



Figure 6.2: Percentage of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end 2014-19



³⁹NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2015

- Census 2011 data used.

2016-2019

- Census 2016 data used.

⁴⁰NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2015

- Census 2011 data used.

2016-2019

- Census 2016 data used.

6.2.2 Environmental Pollution Complaints

6.2.2.1 Number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made 2014-2019

The number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made increased from almost 54,934 pollution cases in 2014 to just over 79,000 in 2019. This represents an increase of 24,100 or 44% from 54,934 pollution cases in which a complaint was made to local authorities in 2014 (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3: Number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made 2014-19



6.2.2.2 Number of pollution cases closed 2014-2019

The number of pollution cases closed have risen annual from 2014: increasing from 50,941 to 78,714 in 2019. This represents an increase of 27,773 or 55% from the 50,941 pollution cases closed in 2014 (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4: Number of pollution cases closed 2014-19



6.2.2.3 Number of pollution cases on hand at year-end 2015-2019 ⁴¹

The number of pollution cases on hand at the end of the year increased between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, 7,334 pollution cases were on hand at year-end. This represents an overall increase of 2,931 or 67% from the 4,403 pollution cases on hand at year-end in 2015 (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Number of pollution cases on hand at year-end 2015-19



6.2.3 Percentage of Local Authority Areas Within the 5 Levels of Litter Pollution

6.2.3.1 Percentage of area within local authorities that when surveyed was (1) unpolluted or litter free, (2) slightly polluted, (3) moderately polluted, (4) significantly polluted and (5) grossly polluted 2014-2019 ⁴²

Figure 6.6 shows the median percentage of local authority areas that were within the five levels of litter pollution between the years 2014 and 2019. The percentage of a local authority area that when surveyed was 'unpolluted or litter free' increased from 10% in 2014 to 19% in 2018, but then decreased to 15% in 2019. Conversely, the proportion of a local authority area that was 'slightly polluted' when surveyed decreased sporadically from 70% in 2014 to 66% in 2019.

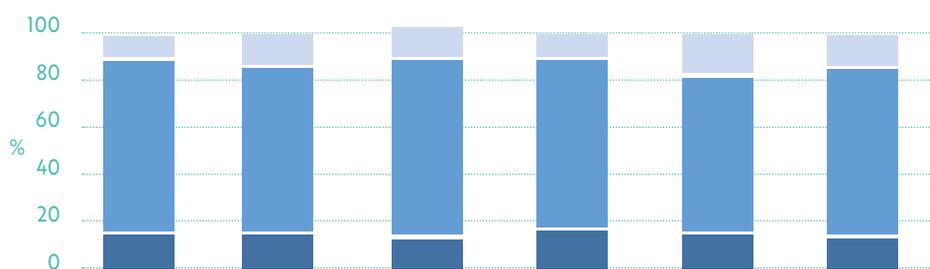
⁴¹ NOAC Guidance Notes 2016

• Figure for year-end 2016 of 24 in NOAC Performance Indicator report for Kerry County Council was subsequently revised by NOAC for 2016 to 193 as per commentary in NOAC Performance Indicator 2017 report. Revised national figure of 6,469 for 2016 therefore differs from initial national figure of 6,300 reported in NOAC Performance Indicator 2016 report.

⁴² NOAC Guidance Notes 2014-2019

• Median national values used for all years.

Figure 6.6: Median percentage of area within local authorities that when surveyed was (1) unpolluted or litter free, (2) slightly polluted, (3) moderately polluted, (4) significantly polluted and (5) grossly polluted 2014-19



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1) unpolluted or litter free	10	14	13	11	19	15
2) slightly polluted	70	66	72	70	63	66
3) moderately polluted	16	15	14	16	15	15
4) significantly polluted	1	2	1	2	1	1
5) grossly polluted	0	0	0	0	0	0

The percentage of a local authority area that was 'moderately polluted' when surveyed remained relatively static during these years. In 2019, 15% of local area surveyed was moderately polluted: representing a slight decrease of one percentage point from 16% in 2014.

The proportion of a local authority area that when surveyed was 'significantly polluted' remained static during these years. In 2019, 1% of local authority area surveyed was significantly polluted. By comparison, the percentage of local authority area that when surveyed was grossly polluted between 2014 and 2019 remained negligible at 0% in each of the five years (Figure 6.6).

6.2.4 Green Flags for Schools

6.2.4.1 Percentage of schools awarded Green Flag status 2018-19

The indicator measuring the percentage of schools that have been awarded green flag status was first introduced in 2018. Over last two years, the percentage of schools that have been rewarded/renewed green flag status has fallen slightly by three percentage points from 51% in 2018 to 48% in 2019.

Figure 6.7: Percentage of schools that have been awarded/renewed green flag status



6.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, methodologies for Waste/Environment sub indicators have remained relatively consistent between 2014-19. Specifically, of the Waste/Environment areas data is available for 5 of 7 sub indicators, with all 5 sub indicators comparable during these years due to the use of a consistent methodological approach.

With respect to the number/percentage of households availing of a 3-bin service, sectoral performance improved between the period 2014-19. Specifically, a 57% increase in the number of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service was reported between 2014-19. Similarly, local authorities reported a 16-percentage point increase in the proportion of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service between 2014 (32%) and 2019 (48%).

In terms of environmental pollution complaints, the number of pollution cases, in which a complaint was made, increased by 44% between 2014-19. This demonstrates the increased remit of the local authority sector in addressing pollution complaints. Conversely, a 55% increase in the number of pollution cases closed was recorded between 2014-19. The number of pollution cases on hand at year-end also increased by 67% between 2015-19. As there has been an increase in the number of pollution cases closed between 2014-19, this evidence suggests that the increase in environmental pollution cases on hand at year-end may be due to the corresponding rise in the number of pollution complaints made during these years.

Litter pollution performance has generally improved between 2014-19 across the sector. For instance, areas within local authorities which were unpolled or litter free increased by five percentage points from 10% in 2014 to 15% in 2019, compared to areas within local authorities that were slightly polluted which decreased from 70% in 2014 to 66% in 2019. Similarly, areas within local authorities which were moderately polluted

decreased from 16% in 2014 to 15% in 2019. Areas within local authorities which were significantly polluted remained static at 1% between 2014 and 2019. Finally, areas within local authorities which were grossly polluted remained negligible at 0% during these years.

The expansive role of local authorities in recent years in managing Waste/Environmental issues is clear from the evidence presented. However, the evidence also highlights areas the sector can concentrate efforts to improve performance – particularly in the area of environmental pollution complaints and in reducing litter pollution nationally.



7. Planning

7.1 Policy relevant to planning indicators

7.1.1 New buildings inspected

Under the Building Control Acts (1990-2014), local authorities are designated as 'Building Control Authorities', with responsibility for monitoring compliance with Building Regulations (Government of Ireland, 1990, Government of Ireland, 2014c). Planning at local level, is therefore the responsibility of individual local authorities.

Building Control Regulations provide for matters relating to procedure, administration, and control. This ensures effective implementation of the Building Regulations and that compliance is being enforced with regards to new building construction and works. This Code of Practice gives practical guidance on relevant statutory provisions for persons who undertake inspections of new buildings, to ensure they meet requirements detailed in the Building Control Regulations. Under the Code of Practice for Inspecting and Certifying Buildings and Works, local authorities are required to inspect a minimum of 12-15% of all new building works in their administrative areas (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2014). These inspections form an important component of the planning function in local authorities to ensure buildings are being constructed in line with legislation.

7.1.2 Planning decisions confirmed by An Bord Pleanála

Local authorities are the primary body responsible for determining whether to grant or refuse planning permission for building and development in their administrative areas. However, when a local authority makes a decision in relation to accepting or refusing a planning application, any participant in the application can appeal the decision to An Bord Pleanála, the statutory body responsible for

the determination of appeals and certain other matters under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Government of Ireland, 2000). In certain instances, the Board can dismiss an appeal where it is satisfied that the appeal is:

- vexatious: intended only to annoy or disturb,
- frivolous: lacking in seriousness,
- without substance or foundation,
- made just to delay the development,
- made to secure the payment of money, gifts, and considerations by anybody, or
- made by a person who cannot be identified (in the Board's opinion) (An Bord Pleanála, n.d.).

In the context of An Bord Pleanála's role in the planning appeals process, local authorities have a responsibility to effectively manage the planning process by ensuring that any planning decisions made are robust and align with national planning legislation and regulations.

7.1.3 Planning enforcement

The planning system in Ireland is operated by local authorities as defined under the Planning and Development Act, 2000. This includes the granting of individual planning permissions and operating an enforcement system to manage unauthorised development (Government of Ireland, 2000, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012). The key objectives for planning enforcement by planning authorities are:

- to bring unauthorised development under control;
- to remedy any undesirable effects of unauthorised development including, where necessary, the remediation of negative effects of the development, the removal or cessation of unacceptable development; and
- to take legal action, where necessary, against those who ignore or flout planning legislation.

It is subsequently the responsibility of the Planning Enforcement section in each local authority to investigate and process complaints in accordance with timeframes set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000.

7.1.4 Planning service costs

The costs for local authorities in providing particular public services, including planning services, are typically identified through an individual local authority's financial management system. To ensure efficient delivery of such services, local authorities typically conduct value for money reviews and audits to assist this process by assessing expenditure programmes. This process is usually undertaken as part of the development of an individual local authority's Corporate Plan, which is typically published once every five years. This enables authorities, particularly through the role of the Audit Committees, which are on a statutory footing, to relate annual input costs to outputs and provide a more rational and informed basis on which to make decisions for allocating available resources considering priority areas for identified services, including planning services.

7.1.5 Fire safety certificates

The Standards for Building Works, which identifies procedures necessary to control building works including fire control, are detailed in Building Control Act 1990 and the Building Regulations 1997. Under these Regulations, a Fire Safety Certificate is issued by a planning authority stating that works or building to which an application relates will, if constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, comply with the requirements under the Building Regulations 1997 (Government of Ireland, 1997b). Such certificates are issued by local authorities based on advice from senior members of the fire service in their authority. Fire Safety Certificates are subsequently required for the following developments:

- Works in connection with the design and construction of a new building
- Works in connection with the material alteration of:
 - o A day centre
 - o A building containing a flat

- o A hotel, hostel or guest building
- o An institutional building
- o A place of assembly
- o A shopping centre

- Works in connection with the material alteration of a shop, office or industrial building where additional floor area is being provided within the existing building or where the building is being sub divided into a number of units for separate occupancy.
- Works in connection with the extension of a building by more than 25 square metres
- A building as regards which a material change of use takes place.

In this context, under the Building Control Act 1990 an application submitted to a local authority must be decided on and the outcome of any decision notified to the applicant within two months of the application date or within such extended period of time as may be agreed between the applicant and the local authority at any time (Government of Ireland, 1990).

7.1.6 Conclusion

The role of local authorities in relation to planning was outlined in Sections 7.1.1-7.1.5. Consequently, planning indicators measured through the annual NOAC Performance Indicators process examine the following:

- New buildings inspected
- Planning decisions confirmed by An Bord Pleanála
- Planning enforcement
- Planning service costs
- Fire safety certificates

Details of the specific indicators measured can be found in Table 7.1, with analysis provided in section 7.2. Where data is available in the area of planning, 9 of 12 sub indicators have remained largely unchanged during these years. All 9 of the sub indicators comparable due to there being relatively minor or no modifications to the underlying methodologies applied to the data collection process.

Table 7.1: Planning Performance Indicator Data Availability 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:		Consistent Methodology		No Data Collected			
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
P1	New Buildings Inspected						
	Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to local authorities						
P2	Number of Planning Decisions Confirmed by An Bord Pleanála						
	Number of planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board						
	Percentage of An Bord Pleanála determinations which confirmed (either with or without variation) the decision made by local authorities						
P3	Percentage of Planning Enforcement Cases Closed as Resolved						
	Number of planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated						
	Number of planning cases closed						
	Percentage of planning cases that were dismissed under section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development						
	Percentage of investigated planning cases resolved to local authorities' satisfaction through negotiations						
	Percentage of investigated planning cases that were closed due to enforcement proceedings						
	Number of planning cases being investigated at year-end						
P4	Cost per Capita of Planning Service						
	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of local authorities per the census						
P5	Applications for Fire Safety Certificates						
	Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt						
	Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant						

7.2 Planning related indicators

7.2.1 New Buildings Inspected

7.2.1.1 Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to local authorities 2015-2019

Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to local authorities decreased between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, 24% of new buildings notified to local authorities were inspected: representing a decrease of three percentage points from 27% in 2015 (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings to Local Authorities, 2015-19



7.2.2 Number of Planning Decisions Confirmed by An Bord Pleanála

7.2.2.1 Number of planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board 2014-2019

The number of local authority planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 1,827 planning decisions, which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála, were determined by the Board. This represents an increase of 732 or 67% compared to the 1,095 local authority planning decisions determined by An Bord Pleanála in 2014 (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2: Number of Local Authority planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board, 2014-19



7.2.2.2 Percentage of An Bord Pleanála determinations which confirmed (either with or without variation) the decision made by local authorities 2014-2019

The percentage of determinations of An Bord Pleanála which confirmed the decision made by local authorities increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 73% of planning decisions made by local authorities were confirmed by An Bord Pleanála: representing an overall increase of three percentage points from 70% in 2014. During these years, the percentage of An Bord Pleanála determinations confirming the decisions made by local authorities increased by nine percentage points from 70% in 2014 to 79% in 2017. Since then, the percentage of local authority planning decisions confirmed by An Bord Pleanála decreased by six percentage points to 73% in 2019 (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Percentage of An Bord Pleanála determinations which confirmed (either with or without variation) the decision made by Local Authorities, 2014-19



7.2.3 Percentage of Planning Enforcement Cases Closed as Resolved

7.2.3.1 Number of planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated 2014-2019

The number of planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 7,065 planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities were investigated: representing an overall increase of 637 or 10% from the 6,428 cases investigated in 2014. During these years, the number of planning cases investigated decreased from 6,428 investigated case in 2014 to 5,996 in 2016, before subsequently increasing to 7,065 in 2019 (Figure 7.4).

7.2.3.2 Number of planning cases closed 2014-2019

The number of investigated planning cases closed during the year remained relatively static between 2014 and 2019 despite annual fluctuations. In 2014, 5,539 investigated planning cases were closed by local authorities. Whilst this figure increased to 6,591 in 2017, it subsequently decreased to 5,578 in 2018 before increasing again to 6,283 investigated planning cases closed in 2019. Since 2014, the overall number of investigated planning cases closed increased by 744 or 13% to 6,283 in 2019 (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.4: Number of planning cases referred to or initiated by the Local Authorities during years that were investigated, 2014-19



Figure 7.5: Number of planning cases closed, 2014-19



7.2.3.3 Percentage of planning cases that were dismissed under section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development 2014-2019⁴³

The percentage of planning cases that were dismissed under section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred, or an exempted development increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 44% of planning cases were dismissed representing an overall increase of 19 percentage points from the 25% of cases that were dismissed under this planning regulation in 2014. During these years, the percentage of cases that were dismissed increased from 25% in 2014 to 52% in 2017, before subsequently decreasing to 44% in 2019 (Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.6: Percentage of planning cases that were dismissed under section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development, 2014-19



7.2.3.4 Percentage of investigated planning cases resolved to local authorities' satisfaction through negotiations 2014-2019

The percentage of investigated planning cases which were resolved to the local authorities' satisfaction through negotiations decreased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 10% of investigated planning cases were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction: representing an overall decrease of 17 percentage points from 27% in 2014. During these years, the percentage of investigated planning cases that were resolved decreased to a low point of nine percent in 2017, before subsequently increasing to 10% in 2019 (Figure 7.7).

Figure 7.7: Percentage of cases resolved to the Local Authorities satisfaction through negotiations, 2014-19



⁴³ **NOAC Guidance Notes**

2014

- Indicator measured cases "dismissed under section 152(2) Planning and Development Act 2000".

2015-2016

- Indicator measured cases "dismissed under section 152(2) Planning and Development Act 2000 or closed because statute barred or an exempted development...".

2017-2019

- Indicator measured cases "dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development".

7.2.3.5 Percentage of investigated planning cases that were closed due to enforcement proceedings 2014-2019 ⁴⁴

The percentage of investigated planning cases that were closed due to enforcement proceedings increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 46% of investigated planning cases were closed: representing an overall increase of four percentage points from 42% in 2014. Between these years, the percentage of planning cases decreased from 42% in 2014 to a low point of 39% in 2017, before subsequent increasing again to 46% in 2019 (Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8: Percentage of investigated planning cases that were closed due to enforcement proceedings, 2014-19



7.2.3.6 Number of planning cases being investigated at year-end 2014-2019

The number of planning cases being investigated at the end of the year increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the 17,239 cases were being investigated at year-end: representing an overall increase of 1,288 or 8% from 15,951 cases in 2014. During these years, the number of planning cases decreased from 15,951 in 2014 to a low point of 15,874 in 2017, but then increased again to 17,239 in 2019 (Figure 7.9).

Figure 7.9: Number of planning cases being investigated at year-end, 2014-19



7.2.4 Cost per Capita of Planning Service

7.2.4.1 Annual Financial Statement (AFS)

Programme D data divided by the population of local authorities per the census 2014-2019 ⁴⁵

The cost per capita of planning services nationally increased annually between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the cost per capita for planning services nationally was €30.27. This represents an increase of €4.00 or 15% from €26.23 per capita for planning services nationally in 2014 (Figure 7.10).

Figure 7.10: Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of Local Authorities per the census, 2014-19



⁴⁴ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2019

- Indicator relates to cases closed subsequent to any type of enforcement action having been taken, from the issue of a warning letter up to and including prosecution or injunction proceedings.

⁴⁵ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014

- 2011 census population data used.

2015-2019

- 2016 census population data used.
- Figures in this report may differ marginally to those reported in the 2015 NOAC Performance Indicator publication due to draft 2016 census population figures being used at the time of 2015 NOAC publication rather than finalised census figures. Finalised 2016 census figures are used in this report for 2015-2018.

7.2.5 Applications for Fire Safety Certificates

7.2.5.1 Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt 2017-2019

This indicator was introduced in 2017. Over the three years reported on, the data reveals that the percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided within two months of their receipt increased between 2017 and 2018. During these years, the percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received increased from 52% in 2017 to 56% in 2018, but then decreased to 53% in 2019. Overall, the percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received increased by one percentage point over the three years from 52% in 2017 to 53% in 2019 (Figure 7.11).

7.2.5.2 Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant 2017-2019

This indicator was also introduced in 2017 and reveals that the percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided within an extended period agreed with the applicant decreased between 2017 and 2018. During these years, the percentage of applications for fire safety certificates decreased from 38% in 2017 to 36% in 2018, but then increased to 40% in 2019. Overall, the percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received increased by two percentage points over the three years from 38% in 2017 to 40% in 2019 (Figure 7.12).

Figure 7.11: Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt, 2017-19



Figure 7.12: Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant, 2017-19



7.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, methodologies for planning sub indicators have remained relatively consistent between the years 2014-2019. Specifically, of the planning areas where data is available, 9 of 12 sub indicators have remained largely unchanged during these years. All 9 of the sub indicators comparable due to there being relatively minor or no modifications to the underlying methodologies applied to the data collection process. With respect to new buildings inspected, a three-percentage point decrease was reported across the local government sector in the buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to local authorities between 2015 (27%) and 2019 (24%).

In terms of planning decisions confirmed by An Bord Pleanála, the number of local authorities' planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board increased by 67% between 2014-19. Equally, the percentage of determinations of An Bord Pleanála which confirmed the decision made by local authorities increased by three percentage points between 2014 (70%) and 2019 (73%).

In the context of planning enforcement cases closed as resolved, the number of planning cases

referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated increased by 10% between 2014-19, whilst the number of planning cases closed increased by 13% during these years. The percentage of planning cases that were dismissed under section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred, or an exempted development also increased by 19 percentage points between 2014 and 2019. Conversely, the percentage of investigated planning cases that were closed due to enforcement proceedings increased by four percentage points between 2014 and 2019. However, the percentage of planning cases being investigated at year-end also increased by 8% between 2014 and 2019. This increase may be somewhat accounted for by the increase (10%) in the number of planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated during the period. Similarly, the percentage of investigated planning cases which were resolved to local authorities' satisfaction through negotiations decreased by 17 percentage points between 2014 (27%) and 2019 (10%). This represents a significant decrease over the period of analysis.

Finally, cost per capita of planning services increased by 15% nationally between the years 2014 and 2019.



8. Fire Services

8.1 Policy relevant to fire services indicators

8.1.1 Fire services costs

Fire services in Ireland are managed at local authority level, with the DHLGH playing an advisory, legislative, and policy-making role. Fire services are operated by fire authorities, which are managed by local authorities. They play an important role in fire prevention and building inspections and in providing emergency services. Fire services receive funding from three primary sources:

- **Government:** Local authorities have an annual budget of approximately €240m to run the fire service (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2016a).
- **Commercial rates**
- **Fire callout charges:** Under the Fire Services Act 1981, local authorities are permitted to charge for fire services, with different local authorities operating different charging structures (Government of Ireland, 1981).

The costs to local authorities for providing particular public services, including fire services, are typically identified through an individual local authority's financial management system. To ensure efficient delivery of such services, local authorities assess expenditure programmes across all areas, including fire services. This enables authorities, particularly through the role of its Audit Committees, which are on a statutory basis, to relate annual input costs to outputs and provide a more rational and informed basis on which to make decisions for allocating available resources in light of priority areas for identified services, including fire services.

8.1.2 Service mobilisation and attendance at scenes

Like all public services, fire services must ensure and be able to validate that they are providing consistent quality and cost-effective services which are reducing loss of life, injury and damage from fire and protecting people's lives.

The publication of *Keeping Communities Safe - A Framework for Fire Safety in Ireland in 2013* subsequently acts as a benchmark for fire service provision nationally in ensuring that the critical public safety role performed by local authority fire services is delivered in terms of defined standards and performance measurements. Specifically, there is an onus on fire services nationally to meet certain performance management objectives, including mobilisation time of the first fire brigade appliance being less than 1.5 minutes in full-time fire stations and less than 6 minutes in retained stations. However, to promote efficiency and effectiveness fire services have been targeted with achieving mobilisation of 1 minute for full-time brigades and 5 minutes for retained brigades (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013b).

In accordance with performance management standards outlined in *Keeping Communities Safe - A Framework for Fire Safety in Ireland*, fire services nationally also record the percentage of cases for both fires and other emergencies by station and overall fire authority where fire authorities attend incidents within 10 minutes, between 11 and 20 minutes and greater than 20 minutes. These systems subsequently act as a benchmark for fire services nationally in maintaining and improving response and attendance rates at scenes where fire services are required.

8.1.3 Conclusion

Sections 8.1.1-8.1.2 outlined current national policy in relation to national Fire Services provision. In this context, the following Fire Services topics are measured by NOAC annually as part of its Performance Indicators process:

- Fire service costs.
- Service mobilisation and attendance at scene.

Specific details of Performance Indicators related to the above Fire service topics can be found in Table 8.1, with analysis provided in sections 8.2. As can be seen in the table below, data

relating to all indicators in this section have been collected over all six years. The methodologies for fire services sub indicators have remained consistent between 2014-19, with all 9 sub indicators remaining largely unchanged during these years and are therefore comparable.

Table 8.1: Fire Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:							
Consistent Methodology		No Data Collected					
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
F1	Cost per Capita of Planning Service						
	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data divided by the population of local authorities per the census figures for the population served by fire authorities						
F2	Service Mobilisation						
	Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of fire						
	Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents						
F3	Percentage Attendance Times at Scenes						
	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes						
	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes						
	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes						
	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes						
	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes						
	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes						

8.2 Fire services related indicators

8.2.1 Cost per Capita of Fire Service

8.2.1.1 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data divided by the population of local authorities per the census figures for the population served by fire authorities 2014-2019⁴⁶

The cost per capita of fire services nationally increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2014, the cost per capita of the fire service was €55.19, increasing to €65.03 in 2019. This represents an 18% increase in the cost per capita for fire services nationally between 2014 and 2019 (Figure 8.1).

8.2.2 Service Mobilisation

8.2.2.1 Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of fire 2014-2019⁴⁷

The average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time stations in respect of fire decreased between 2014 and 2019. During these years, the average time taken to mobilise fire brigades in full-time stations in respect of fire decreased from 1 minute 40 seconds in 2014 to 1 minute 24 seconds in 2019: representing a decrease of 16% in the time taken to mobilise fire brigades in full-time stations in respect to fire incidents.

The average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in part-time stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire increased remained relatively static between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the average time taken to mobilise fire brigades in part-time stations in respect of fire was 5 minutes 30 seconds: a decrease of two seconds from 5 minutes 32 seconds in 2014 (Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.1: Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data divided by the population of local authorities per the census figures for the population served by fire authorities 2014-19



Note: Figure for 2019 includes all 31 Local Authorities. This differentiates from what is reported by NOAC for this year due to their exclusion of Cork County and City Local Authorities.

Figure 8.2: Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of fire 2014-19



⁴⁶ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2015

- 2011 census population data used.

2016-2019

- 2016 census population data used.

⁴⁷ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2019

- Median values used for all years.

8.2.2.2 Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents 2014-2019 ⁴⁸

The average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents decreased annually between 2014 and 2019. Between these years, the average time taken to mobilise full-time fire stations decreased from 1 minute 47 seconds in 2014 to 1 minute 31 seconds in 2019. This represents a decrease of 15% in time taken to mobilise fire brigades in full-time stations between 2014 and 2019 in respect of non-fire incidents.

The average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in part-time stations (retained fire service) in respect of non-fire emergency incidents decreased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the average time taken to mobilise fire brigades in part-time stations in respect to non-fire emergency incidents was 5 minutes 36 seconds: decreasing by 5% from 5 minutes 55 seconds in 2014 (Figure 8.3).

8.2.3 Percentage Attendance Times at Scenes

8.2.3.1 Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes 2014-2019

The percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was within 10 minutes decreased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the percentage of cases in which first attendance at the scene was within 10 minutes was 55%: decreasing by four percentage points from almost 59% in 2014 (Figure 8.4).

8.2.3.2 Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes 2014-2019

The percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes was almost 33%: representing a decrease of almost two percentage points from 32% in 2014 (Figure 8.5).

Figure 8.3: Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents 2014-19



Figure 8.4: Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes 2014-19



Figure 8.5: Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes, 2014-19



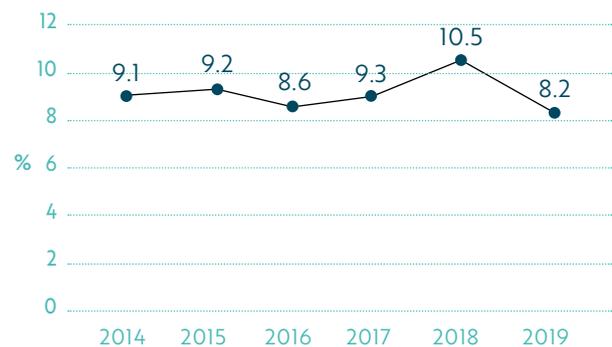
⁴⁸ NOAC Guidance Notes 2014-2019

• Median values used for all years.

8.2.3.3 Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes 2014-2019

In terms of the percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 20 minutes, there has been an overall decrease between 2014 and 2019. During these years, the percentage of fire cases in which attendance was at the scene after 20 minutes increased from 9% in 2014 to 10.5% in 2018, but then decreased to 8% in 2019. Overall, the percentage of fire cases (in attendance after 20 minutes) decreased by almost one percentage from 9% in 2014 to 8% in 2019 (Figure 8.6).

Figure 8.6: Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes, 2014-19



8.2.3.4 Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes 2014-2019

The percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was within 10 minutes decreased between 2014 and 2018. In 2019, the percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was within 10 minutes was 46%: representing an overall decrease of six percentage points from 52% in 2014 (Figure 8.7).

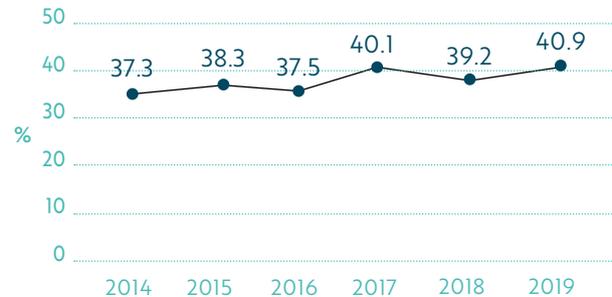
Figure 8.7: Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes, 2014-2019.



8.2.3.5 Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes 2014-2019

The percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes was almost 41%: increasing by four percentage points from 37% in 2014 (Figure 8.8).

Figure 8.8: Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes, 2014-19



8.2.3.6 Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes 2014-2019

The percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 20 minutes remained relatively static between 2014 and 2019. During these years, the percentage of non-fire cases where attendance at the scene was after 20 minutes increased from 11% in 2014 to almost 12% in 2018, but then decreased again to 11 in 2019 (Figure 8.9).

Figure 8.9: Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes, 2014-19



8.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, methodologies for fire services sub indicators have remained consistent between 2014-19, with all 9 sub indicators remaining largely unchanged during these years and are therefore comparable. In terms of fire service expenditure, there has been an overall increase of 18% in the cost per capita of fire services between 2014 and 2019. In the context of fire service mobilisation with respect to fire emergencies, local authorities that operate full-time fire stations recorded a 16% improvement in the time taken to mobilise fire units between 2014 (1 min 40 seconds) and 2019 (1 min 24 seconds). By comparison, for those local authorities operating part-time fire stations, performance remained relatively stable during these years, with the time taken to mobilise fire units decreasing by 2 seconds between 2014 (5 mins 32 seconds) and 2019 (5 mins 30 seconds) for fire emergencies.

With respect to fire service mobilisation for non-fire emergencies, local authorities that operate full-time fire stations recorded a 15% improvement in the time taken to mobilise fire units between 2014 (1 min 47 seconds) and 2019 (1 min 31 seconds). Performance also improved for those local authorities operating part-time fire stations during these years, with the time taken to mobilise fire units decreasing by 5% between 2014 (5 mins 55 seconds) and 2019 (5 mins 36 seconds) for non-fire emergencies.

In relation to attendance at fire scenes, local authority performance deteriorated slightly over the six-years, with the percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at the scene within 10 minutes decreasing by four percentage points between 2014 (59%) and 2019 (55%). In comparison, the percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes increased by two percentage points between 2014 (32%) and 2019 (34%). Moreover, the percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 20 minutes decreased by almost one percentage point between 2014 (9%) and 2019 (8%).

For non-fire cases, local authority performance related to attendance at non-fire scenes also deteriorated somewhat between the years 2014 and 2019. Specifically, the percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was within 10 minutes decreased by six percentage points between 2014 (52%) and 2019 (46%). This subsequent deterioration resulted in a corresponding four percentage points increase in the percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes between 2014 (37%) and 2019 (41%). However, the percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was after 20 minutes remained at 11% in 2014 and 2019.

The overall results related to fire service mobilisation align with national performance management objectives related to fire service delivery, including mobilisation time of the first fire brigade appliance being less than 1.5 minutes in full-time fire stations and less than 6 minutes in retained stations (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013b).

9. Library/Recreation Services

9.1 Policy relevant to library/recreation services indicators

9.1.1 Library visits and issues

Libraries play a crucial role as centres of knowledge, information and culture within communities. Specifically, public libraries:

- Are a local service with a nationwide reach – members can use all library services, including borrowing and returning items, at any library nationally
- Deliver a national literacy and reading programme Right to Read through a core set of services and resources
- Deliver a national Work Matters programme of services for business and employment supports for locally based entrepreneurs, start-ups and job seekers
- Deliver the Healthy Ireland at your library initiative – developing health information in public libraries, providing books, e-books, audiobooks and e-magazines on health and wellbeing, in addition to talks, discussions and workshops with a focus on physical health, mental health and health literacy
- Offer a national public library catalogue supported by a nationwide delivery service – items can be reserved online or in person and delivered quickly to a local library – the first such national service anywhere in the world
- Offer free internet connectivity through Wifi and PCs to connect communities to the Internet and bridge the digital divide

In addition, public libraries provide access to a large collection of free online resources, including:

- Over 500 e-learning courses and more than 100 online language courses,
- 48,000 e-books and 40,000 e-audio books, and

- 4,000 international magazine titles and 2,500 accessible newspapers.

A key programme of work outlined in A Strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017 was the need for ongoing research monitoring, reviewing and evaluation to ensure future library planning service delivery. Specifically, key aims within this strategy included:

- Keeping public libraries at the forefront of best practice in library service provision and workforce development.
- Identifying the needs of individuals and communities.
- Informing existing and emerging programmes, ensuring a responsive and effective public library service.
- Ensuring programmes achieve economic and social return on investment.
- Generating measurable data on the provision and impact of library services.

(Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013c).

The national *Public Library Standards and Benchmarks* were published in 2015 and are a series of performance measurements that aim to ensure a high standard of infrastructure and service development across the library service. They include core elements of the service including access, development of core services, optimum opening hours, staffing, service delivery and performance. The purpose is to ensure development is consistent, monitored and sustained. Each local authority is subsequently required to measure performance of the local library service against relevant standards and benchmarks (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2015).

There is significant potential to grow library membership which currently stands at 16% of the population. Specifically, the local government sector has ambitions to extend this membership to 30% of the population by 2022 (Government of Ireland, 2019a), and to subsequently increase public usage of libraries in the process. Measuring annual performance, including the number of library visits and items borrowed therefore plays an important role in assessing local authority performance in relation to library services.

9.1.2 Library services costs

The library service in Ireland is an important local and national asset with central government and local authorities' own resources used to develop the service nationally. Specifically, local authorities have primary responsibility for managing and developing library services, with delivery of capital projects often funded through central government capital funding programmes (Government of Ireland, 2019a). With respect to funding of library services, under the *Public Library Standards and Benchmarks* commitments published in 2015, each public library service was responsible for achieving a per capita stock expenditure of €3.77 annually (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2015). However, it is recognised there remains a wide disparity in terms of annual spend on collections across local authorities nationally and a sustained

annual investment by all local authorities is required to ensure the quality and relevance of Irish library collections and to expand digital collections (Government of Ireland, 2019a).

9.1.3 Conclusion

Sections 9.1.1 – 9.1.2 outlined current national policy in relation to national Library service provision. In this context, the following Library topics are measured by NOAC annually as part of its Performance Indicators process:

- Library visits and issues
- Library services costs

Specific details of Performance Indicators related to the above Library service topics can be found in Table 9.1, with analysis provided in sections 9.2. The methodologies for the Libraries sub indicators have remained relatively consistent between 2014-19. Specifically, of the Library areas where data is available 2 of the 3 sub indicators have remained largely unchanged during this period and are therefore comparable over time.

Table 9.1: Library/Recreation Services Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:							
Consistent Methodology			No Data Collected		Break in Methodology		
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
L1	Library Visits and Issues						
	Number of library visits per head of population						
	Number of library items issued to borrowers						
L2	Cost per Capita of Operating a Library Service						
	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data divided by the population of local authorities per the census						

9.2 Library/Recreation Services related indicators

9.2.1 Library Visits and Issues

9.2.1.1 Number of library visits per head of population 2014-2019 ⁴⁹

The average number of library visits per head of population decreased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, there were 3.57 library visits per head of the population. This represents an overall decrease of 7% from 3.85 library visits in 2014 (Figure 9.1).

9.2.1.2 Number of library items issued to borrowers 2015-2019 ⁵⁰

The number of library items issued to borrowers decreased between 2015 and 2019. During the years 2015 and 2016, almost 18.2 million library items were issued to borrowers. In the subsequent years, the number of library items that were issued to borrowers decreased to almost 14 million library items in 2018, but then increased to 15.4 million in 2019. The overall number of library items issued to borrowers during these years decreased by almost 2.8 million or 15% from almost 18.2 million in 2015 to 15.4 million in 2019 (Figure 9.2).

Figure 9.1: Number of library visits per head of population, 2014-19



Figure 9.2: Number of library items issued to borrowers, 2015-19



⁴⁹ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014

- 2011 census population data used.
- Indicator for 2014 examined 'Number of visits to libraries per 1,000 population for the local authority'. To ensure comparability with preceding years, number of visits per capita was subsequently derived.

2015

- 2015 figures in this report may differ marginally to those reported in the 2015 NOAC Performance Indicator publication due to draft 2016 census population figures being used at the time of 2015 NOAC publication rather than finalised census figures. Finalised 2016 census figures are used in this report for 2015-2018 calculations.

2015-2019

- 2016 census population data used.

⁵⁰ NOAC Guidance Notes

2017-2019

- Reserves and renewals of physical objects are not counted in 2017-2018 but are included in 2015-2016 figures.

9.2.2 Cost per Capita of Operating a Library Service

9.2.2.1 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data divided by the population of local authorities per the census 2014-2019⁵¹

The cost per capita of library services nationally increased between 2014 and 2019: increasing from €30.18 in 2014 to €34.94 in 2019. This represents an overall increase of 16% in the cost per capita of library services between 2014 and 2019 (Figure 9.3).

9.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, methodologies for Libraries sub indicators have remained relatively consistent between 2014-19. Specifically, of the Library areas where data is available 2 of the 3 sub indicators have remained largely unchanged during this period and are therefore comparable over time.

In terms of library visits and issues, the number of library visits per head of population decreased by 7% between 2014 (3.85) and 2019 (3.57). While the number of library items issues to borrowers decreased by 15% between 2015-2019, this is largely a function of a significant methodological change between 2015-2016 and 2017-2019, in which the methodology for the latter period specifically excluded counting of reserves and renewals of physical objects which were not excluded in counting of figures in 2015-2016.

Finally, in the context of Library service expenditure the cost per capita of Library services increased by 16% between the years 2014 and 2019.

Figure 9.3: Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data divided by the population of local authorities per the census, 2014-19



⁵¹ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014

- 2011 census population data used.
- Indicator for 2014 examined 'Cost of operating libraries per 1,000 population for the local authority'. To ensure comparability with preceding years, cost per capita was subsequently derived.

2015

- 2015 figures in this report may differ marginally to those reported in the 2015 NOAC Performance Indicator publication due to draft 2016 census population figures being used at the time of 2015 NOAC publication rather than finalised 2016 census figures. Finalised 2016 census figures are used in this report for 2015 and subsequent years calculations.

2015-2019

- 2016 census population data used.

10. Youth/Community

10.1 Policy relevant to youth/community indicators

10.1.1 Comhairle na nÓg

An important aspect in local authority decision-making is to ensure that all groups in society are represented through its policy decisions, including the views of young people. In this context, Comhairle na nÓg acts as a consultative forum for young people (under the age of 18) nationally that local authorities can engage with when making policy decisions at a local level. Local authorities utilise Comhairle na nÓg as a mechanism to seek the views of young people on the development of relevant services and policies, including heritage plans, play and recreation policies, policing plans, giving feedback on youth-friendly questionnaires, or requesting feedback on the location or type of new sports facility to be established in the area. Through their network of youth councils across all local authorities nationally, Comhairle na nÓg subsequently plays an important role in local authority policy making, including through its formal submissions on local policies and participation in local public policy consultations at a local authority level (Comhairle na nÓg, n.d.).

10.1.2 Public Participation Networks

In 2014, the Local Government Act was amended to introduce Public Participation Networks (PPNs). The PPN acknowledges the role of volunteer-led organisations to local economic, social, and environmental capital. It promotes input by these organisations into local government through a structure that ensures public participation and representation on decision-making committees within local government (Government of Ireland, 2018c). These PPNs have been established in every local authority nationally.

Local authorities and PPNs collaborate to support communities and develop the capacity of member organisations to engage meaningfully

on issues of concern. PPNs have a significant role in the development and education of their member groups, sharing information, encouraging best practice, and facilitating networking. Local authorities also play a crucial role in facilitating participation through open consultative processes and active engagement across three PPN pillars, specifically:

- Community and voluntary
- Social inclusion
- Environmental

Each organisation that opts to join the PPN subsequently elects to be part of one of these three pillars based on the primary interest which they represent. The PPNs are subsequently designed to support open and inclusive policymaking, enhance public participation, improve transparency and accountability, build civic capacity, and increase buy-in and better decision-making across all local authority decision-making.

10.1.3 Conclusion

Sections 10.1.1-10.1.2 outlined current national policy in relation to Youth and Community engagement across local authorities. In this context, the following Youth/Community topics are measured by NOAC annually as part of its Performance Indicators process:

- Participation in Comhairle na nÓg
- Public Participation Networks

Specific details of Performance Indicators related to the above Housing topics can be found in Table 10.1, with analysis provided in sections 10.2. The methodologies for Youth/Community sub indicators remained relatively consistent between the years 2015 and 2019. Specifically, of the Youth/Community areas where data is available, the 2 sub indicators remained largely unchanged during this period. However, data exists for the entire period for only 1 of these 2 sub indicators.

Table 10.1: Youth/Community Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:		Consistent Methodology		No Data Collected			
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Y1	Participation in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme						
	Percentage of local schools involved in local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme						
Y2	Groups Associated with the Public Participation Network (PPN)						
	Number of organisations included in the county registers at year-end and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN						

10.2 Youth/Community related indicators

10.2.1 Participation in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme

10.2.1.1 Percentage of local schools involved in local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme 2014-2019

The percentage of local schools involved in the Comhairle na nÓg scheme increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 68% of local schools were involved in the Comhairle na nÓg scheme. This represents an increase of 16 percentage points from 52% in 2014 to 68% in 2019 (Figure 10.1).

Figure 10.1: Percentage of local schools involved in local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme, 2014-19



10.2.2 Groups Associated with the Public Participation Network (PPN)

10.2.2.1 Number of organisations included in the county registers at year-end and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN 2015-2019

The number of organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN as a proportion of the number of organisations included in the county registers at year-end decreased between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, 17% of organisations on country registers at year-end opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College with the PPN. This represents a decrease of three percentage points from 20% in 2015 to 17% in 2019 (Figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2: Number of organisations included in the county registers at year-end and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN, 2015-19



10.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, methodologies for Youth/Community sub indicators remained relatively consistent between the years 2015 and 2019. Specifically, of the Youth/Community areas where data is available, the 2 sub indicators remained largely unchanged during this period. However, data exists for the entire period for only 1 of these 2 sub indicators. As it is a single years' data that is missing (as the indicator was not established until 2015), the impact of this missing year diminishes over time.

The data revealed that the percentage of local schools involved in the Comhairle na nÓg scheme increased by 16 percentage points between the years 2014 (52%) and 2019 (68%). However, the number of organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN as a proportion of the number of organisations included in the county registers at year-end decreased moderately by three percentage points between 2015 (20%) and 2019 (17%).



11. Corporate

11.1 Policy relevant to corporate indicators

11.1.1 Local authority staffing

Staffing numbers for the local authority sector, as well as the broader public sector, are collated through the Public Service Numbers Databank which is hosted and maintained by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, providing access to information from 1980 onwards (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2019).

The DHLGH oversees workforce planning for the local government sector, including the monitoring of local government sector employment levels. To this end, the DHLGH collates aggregate quarterly data on staff numbers in each local authority on a whole time equivalent (WTE) basis for submission to the Public Service Numbers Databank. However, granular data, in terms of the detailed breakdown of all full-time and part-time positions, is not collected and consequently not measured.

11.1.2 Sick leave

In line with significant public expenditure reform introduced through the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform in recent years, a revised public service sick leave scheme was rolled out across the public sector. The Public Service Sick Leave Scheme came into effect in March 2014 (Government of Ireland, 2014b). The administrative arrangement for paid sick leave for civil servants is outlined in the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform's Circular 05/2018: Arrangements for Paid Sick Leave (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2014a).

One of the primary aspects of the scheme is the provision of sick leave at full pay for three months (i.e., 92 days) and at half pay for three months (i.e., 91 days) annually, subject to an

overall limit of 6 months (i.e., 183 days) paid sick leave (at either full or half pay) in any four year period (Government of Ireland, 2014b). The rationale for the scheme is to provide support to public servants who become ill whilst also reducing the costs of sick leave in the public service.

11.1.3 Website and social media

The nature of local authority business is constantly evolving as new needs emerge in response to changes in society. Managing these changes successfully requires co-ordinated communication using a range of different channels.

In recent years, communication issues have come to the forefront of local authority activity because of:

- the growth of information and communication technologies
- the focus on improving customer service
- changes in performance assessment
- increasing ethnic diversity among customers
- greater awareness of the need for accessible communication for people with disabilities and people who have language or literacy difficulties.

In this context, digital channels (e.g., website, social media) have become increasingly important for public bodies as a means of communicating to and with the public on issues of public relevance. For instance, between 2016 and 2018, the percentage of people who accessed public authorities' or public services' websites/apps for information rose from 49% to 52%. Similarly, the percentage of people who downloaded or printed official forms online decreased from 46% to 43%, while those who submitted forms online rose from 58% to 60% between 2016 and 2018 (Central Statistics Office, 2018).

While digital channels offer a useful means of engaging with the public, it is important to recognise that other non-social media channels and platforms also attract large numbers of users e.g., broadcast media and print media, and these traditional mediums also play a crucial role and offer significant reach for public service bodies. Notwithstanding the benefits of traditional communication channels for public sector bodies, the strategic use of digital media channels as part of an overall communications strategy offers an opportunity for local authorities to increase engagement with residents, ensure better customer service, and promote wider sharing of information on the services most important to citizens.

11.1.4 Cost of ICT provision

The Public Service ICT Strategy aims to enhance information and communications technology (ICT) across the public sector to deliver government services into the future (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2015). It is specifically aligned with the objectives of the Public Service Reform (Our Public Service 2020) and Civil Service Renewal plans (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2014b). The Strategy aims to provide a framework for the delivery of greater efficiencies in public service ICT delivery and administration. This means better outcomes for citizens, businesses, and public servants.

In the context of local authorities, ICT is a cornerstone of service delivery to both the public and to businesses. Subsequent investment in employee ICT resources is therefore crucial to ensure efficient and effective service delivery to citizens.

11.1.5 Conclusion

The role of local authorities in relation to Corporate services was outlined in Sections 11.1.1-11.1.4. Consequently, corporate service indicators measured through the annual NOAC Performance Indicators process examine the following:

- Number of whole-time equivalent employees (WTE)
- Working days lost to sickness
- Local authority website and social media usage, and
- Overall cost of ICT provision per WTE

Details of the specific indicators measured can be found in Table 11.1, with analysis provided in sections 11.2. The methodologies for Corporate sub indicators remained somewhat consistent between the years 2014 and 2019. Specifically, of the Corporate areas where data is available, 4 of the 7 sub indicators are comparable over the entire period.

Table 11.1: Corporate Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:							
Consistent Methodology		No Data Collected					
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
C1	Number of Whole-Time Equivalent Employees						
	Whole-Time Equivalent employees in local authorities at year-end						
C2	Working Days Lost to Sickness						
	Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave						
	Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave						
C3	Local Authorities' Websites and Social Media Use						
	Page views of local authorities' websites						
	Number of followers of local authorities' social media accounts at year-end						
C4	Cost of ICT Provision per Whole-Time Equivalent Employee						
	Cost (€) ICT expenditure divided by Whole-Time Equivalent number						
C5	Overall cost of ICT as a proportion of Revenue expenditure						
	All ICT expenditure calculated as a proportion of Revenue expenditure						

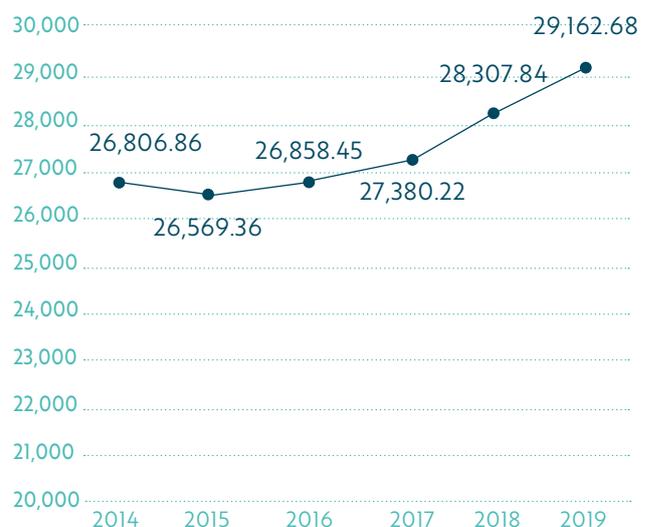
11.2 Corporate related indicators

11.2.1 Number of Whole-Time Equivalent Employees

11.2.1.1 Whole-Time Equivalent employees in local authorities at year-end 2014-2019

The number of Whole-Time Equivalent (WTE) employees in local authorities increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, local authorities employed 29,163 WTE staff. This represents an increase of 2,356 or 9% from the 26,807 WTE staff employed in 2014 (Figure 11.1).

Figure 11.1: Whole-Time Equivalent employees in Local Authorities at year-end, 2014-19



11.2.2 Working Days Lost to Sickness

11.2.2.1 Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave 2014-2019⁵²

The percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave increased marginally between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 3.71% of paid working days were lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave across local authorities nationally. This represents an increase of less than one percentage point in respect to paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave during these years (2014-19) (Figure 11.2).

11.2.2.2 Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave 2014-2019⁵³

The percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave decreased marginally between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 0.36% of paid working days were lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave: decreasing from 0.40% in 2014 (Figure 11.3).

11.2.3 Local Authorities' Websites and Social Media Use

11.2.3.1 Page views of local authorities' websites 2014-2019

The total page views of local authorities' websites increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, there were almost 81.3 million page views of local authorities' websites. This represents an increase of 35.3 million or 77% from the 46 million page views of local authorities' websites in 2014 (Figure 11.4).

Figure 11.2: Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave, 2014-19



Figure 11.3: Percentage of paid working days lost to absence through self-certified sick leave, 2014-19



Figure 11.4: Page views of Local Authorities websites, 2014-19



⁵² NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2019

- Guidelines for 2014-2015 stipulate working days lost.
- Guidelines for 2016-2019 stipulate only paid working days lost.
- Separation of calculations of both paid and unpaid working days lost through medically certified sick leave based on underlying data for 2014-2015 were determined prior to analysis. All years are therefore comparable.

⁵³ NOAC Guidance Notes

2014-2019

- Guidelines for 2014-2015 stipulate working days lost.
- Guidelines for 2016-2018 stipulate only paid working days lost.
- Separation of calculations of both paid and unpaid working days lost through self-certified sick leave based on underlying data for 2014-2015 were determined prior to analysis. All years are therefore comparable.

11.2.3.2 Number of followers of local authorities' social media accounts at year-end 2015-2019

The total number of followers of local authorities' social media accounts increased between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, there were 3.1 million followers of local authorities' social media accounts. This represents an increase of almost 2.5 million from 0.6 million followers to local authorities' social media accounts in 2014 (Figure 11.5).

11.2.4 Cost of ICT Provision per Whole-Time Equivalent Employee

11.2.4.1 Cost (€) ICT expenditure divided by Whole-Time Equivalent number 2015-2019 ⁵⁴

The cost of ICT provision per Whole-Time Equivalent (WTE) employee increased between 2015 and 2019. During these years, the cost of ICT provision per WTE employee decreased from €2,689 in 2015 to €2,681 in 2016, but then increased steadily to €3,061 in 2019. The overall cost of ICT provision per WTE employees increased by €371 or 14% from €2,689 in 2014 to €3,061 in 2019 (Figure 11.6).

11.2.4.2 All ICT expenditure calculated as a proportion of Revenue expenditure 2018-2019

Total ICT expenditure as a proportion of Revenue expenditure increased marginally from 1.75% in 2018 to 1.78% in 2019.

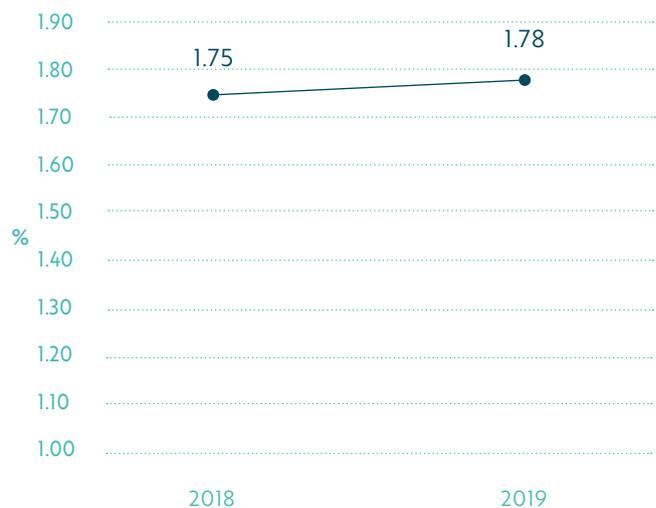
Figure 11.5: Number of followers of Local Authorities social media accounts at year-end, 2015-19



Figure 11.6: Cost (€) ICT expenditure by Whole-Time Equivalent number, 2015-19



Figure 11.7: All ICT expenditure as a proportion of Revenue expenditure, 2018-19



⁵⁴ NOAC Guidance Notes

2015

• 2015 does not include ZCA under IT expenditure

2017-2019

• For the 2017-2019 calculations, the % attributed to the total LGMA general charge was 56% compared with 50% in 2015-2016.

11.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, methodologies for Corporate sub indicators remained somewhat consistent between the years 2014 and 2019. Specifically, of the Corporate areas where data is available, 4 of the 7 sub indicators are comparable over the entire period.

In this regard, the number of Whole-Time Equivalent (WTE) employees in local authorities increased by 9% between 2014 (26,807) and 2019 (29,163).

In terms of working days lost to sickness, the percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave increased by less than one percentage point between 2014 (3.34%) and 2019 (3.71%). By comparison, the percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave remained relatively stable during these years: decreasing by less than one percentage point between 2014 (0.40%) and 2019 (0.36%). With respect to local authorities' websites and social media usage, total page views of local authorities' websites increased by 77% between the years 2014 and 2019. Moreover, the number of followers of local authorities' social media accounts increased by 2.5 million between the years 2015 and 2019.

The cost of ICT provision per WTE employee also increased by 14% between the years 2015 and 2019. However, it should be noted that due to methodological changes to the indicator midway through the period, it is difficult to infer if this was due to increased local authority expenditure per WTE or if a change in methodologies contributed to perceived expenditure increases across the sector. Finally, the total expenditure calculated as a proportion of revenue expenditure decreased by less than one percentage point between the years 2018 (1.75%) and 2019 (1.78%).

12. Finance

12.1 Policy relevant to finance indicators

12.1.1 Revenue account balance

In terms of local government finances, the DHLGH is responsible for the financial well-being and effective financial management and accountability of local authorities and the promotion of value for money principles in the sector. Each local authority is required to prepare an Annual Financial Statement (AFS) by the end of March following the year end and to publish it by the end of June. These financial statements then undergo an independent audit by the Local Government Audit Service of the DHPLG (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018).

In terms of expenditure, capital expenditure is financed largely by State grants with the balance being funded from development levies and borrowings and own internal resources and property sales. With respect to some projects (e.g., local authority offices) they may be funded entirely by the local authority's own resources or through borrowing. Current expenditure covers day-to-day running of the local authority, including staff salaries, housing maintenance, pensions, operational costs etc. Current expenditure is funded from a variety of funding streams, including commercial rates, housing rents, housing loan repayments, waste charges, parking charges and planning application fees amongst other sources.

12.1.2 Collection of major revenue sources

Three of the revenue sources through which local authorities derive a significant proportion of their income include Commercial Rates, Rents and Annuities, and Housing Loans. Without the collection of these income sources, local authorities would be unable to provide the range of public services which they offer.

In the context of Commercial Rates, local authorities are obliged by law to levy rates on commercial and industrial properties. The levying and collection of rates are a matter for individual local authorities. The Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV), which is applied to the valuation of each property to determine the amount payable in rates is decided by elected members of each local authority in their annual budget and its determination is a reserved function of a local authority (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2016b).

Local authorities are the main providers of housing for individuals in need of housing who are unable to afford it from their resources. Those in receipt of social housing are subsequently required to pay Rent/Annuities to their respective local authority based on an assessment of their ability to pay. The collection of Rent and Annuities from social housing tenants subsequently represents an additional important revenue resource for individual local authorities.

Individuals who wish to purchase a house or to build a house but cannot obtain a loan from a private lending institution may be eligible for a housing loan from a local authority through the local authority Tenant Purchase Scheme. All tenants who apply to purchase their houses are supported by local authorities to enable them to decide on suitable purchase options. Collection of Housing Loan repayments from such borrowers subsequently represents an additional revenue source upon which local authorities also rely.

12.1.3 Conclusion

The role of local authorities in relation to managing their Finances was outlined in Sections 12.1.1-12.1.2. Consequently, finance indicators measured through the annual NOAC Performance Indicators process examine the following:

- Revenue account balances
- Collection of major revenue sources.

Details of the specific indicators measured can be found in Table 12.1, with analysis provided in section 12.2. The methodologies for the finance sub indicators remained consistent between 2014-2019. Specifically, of the finance areas where data is available, 4 of the 6 sub indicators have remained consistent over the six years (2014-19) without undergoing methodological changes.

Table 12.1: Finance Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:		Consistent Methodology		No Data Collected			
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
M1	Six-Year Summary of Revenue Account Balance						
	Cumulative surplus/deficit balance of local authorities at year-end in the Revenue Accounts from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS)						
	Cumulative surplus/deficit at year-end as a percentage of Total Income from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS)						
	Revenue expenditure per capita (€)						
M2	Six-Year Summary of % Collection Levels for Major Revenue Sources						
	Median percentage collection figures for (a) Rates						
	Median percentage collection figures for (b) Rents & Annuities						
	Median percentage collection figures for (c) Housing Loans						

12.2 Finance related indicators

12.2.1 Six-Year Summary of Revenue Account Balance

12.2.1.1 Cumulative surplus/deficit balance of local authorities at year-end in the Revenue Accounts from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) 2014-2019

The cumulative balance of local authorities at year-end in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the cumulative surplus balance of local authorities at year-end was €45.6 million: an increase of almost €42.2 million in cumulative revenue balances from almost €3.4 million in 2014 (Figure 12.1).

12.2.1.2 Cumulative surplus/deficit at year-end as a percentage of Total Income from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) 2015-2019

The cumulative surplus balance as a percentage of total income increased between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, the cumulative surplus balance as a percentage of total income was 0.86%: an increase of 0.49 percentage points from 0.36% in 2015 (Figure 12.2).

Figure 12.1: Cumulative surplus/deficit balance of local authorities at year-end in the Revenue Accounts from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS), 2014-19

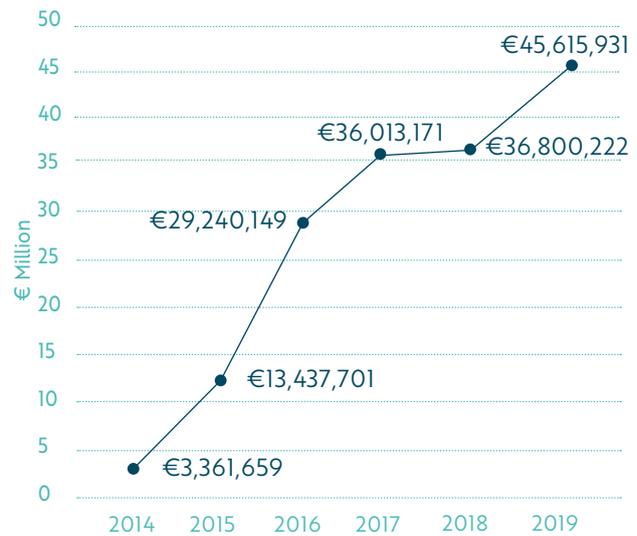


Figure 12.2: Cumulative surplus/deficit at year-end as a percentage of Total Income from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS), 2015-2019



12.2.1.3 Revenue expenditure per capita (€) 2016-2019⁵⁵

Revenue expenditure per capita increased annually between 2016 and 2019. In 2019, revenue expenditure per capita was €1,060: increasing from €842 in 2016. This represents an overall increase of €218 or 26% in revenue expenditure per capita between the years 2016 and 2019 (Figure 12.3).

12.2.2 Six-Year Summary of % Collection Levels for Major Revenue Sources

12.2.2.1 Median percentage collection figures for (a) Rates 2014-2019⁵⁶

The median percentage collection figure for rates increased annually between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the median percentage collection figure for rates across local authorities nationally was 87%. This represents an increase of 15 percentage points in the collection of commercial rates from 72% in 2014 (Figure 12.4).

12.2.2.2 Median percentage collection figures for (b) Rents & Annuities 2014-2019⁵⁷

The median percentage collection figure for Rents & Annuities increased between the years 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the median percentage collection figure for Rents and Annuities across local authorities nationally was 90%: representing an increase of three percentage points from 87% in 2014 (Figure 12.5).

Figure 12.3: Revenue expenditure per capita (€), 2016-19



Figure 12.4: Median percentage collection figures for (a) Rates, 2014-19



Figure 12.5: Median percentage collection figures for (b) Rents & Annuities, 2014-19



⁵⁵ NOAC Guidance Notes 2016-2018

• 2016 census data used.

⁵⁶ NOAC Guidance Notes 2014-2019

• Median values used for all years.

⁵⁷ NOAC Guidance Notes 2014-2019

• Median values used for all years.

12.2.2.3 Median percentage collection figures for (c) Housing Loans 2014-2019⁵⁸

The median percentage collection figure for Housing Loans increased between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the median percentage for housing loans collected was 78%. This represents a 13 percentage-point increase from 65% in 2014 (Figure 12.6).

Figure 12.6: Median percentage collection figures for (c) Housing Loans, 2014-19



12.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, methodologies for finance sub indicators remained consistent between 2014-2019. Specifically, of the finance areas where data is available, 4 of the 6 sub indicators have remained consistent over the six years (2014-19) without undergoing methodological changes.

Analysis of revenue account balances demonstrated that the cumulative balance of local authorities at year-end in their Revenue Accounts from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) increased by €42.2 million between the years 2014 (€3.4 million) and 2019 (€45.6 million). More specifically, the cumulative surplus balance of local authorities as a percentage of local authorities' total income increased marginally by less than one percentage point between 2015 (0.37%) and 2019 (0.86%). With respect to local authority expenditure, revenue expenditure per capita also increased by 26% between the years 2016 and 2019.

Performance improvements were also recorded by the sector in terms of percentage collection levels of major revenue sources during the period. For instance, the median percentage collection figure for Rates, Housing Loans and Rents & Annuities increased by 15, 13 and 3 percentage points respectively between the years 2014 and 2019.

⁵⁸ NOAC Guidance Notes
2014-2019

• Median values used for all years.



13. Economic Development

13.1 Policy relevant to economic development

13.1.1 Local Enterprise Office job creation

Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) operates through individual local authorities and provide advice, information, and support to start-up businesses and those interested in growing their business. LEOs are primarily responsible for the following:

- Drive the development of local enterprise, promoting local micro and small business job creation.
- Promote and support business start-ups.
- Increase the job potential of new and existing micro and small businesses.
- Increase the number of innovative businesses with potential to export.

Since 2014 LEOs have approved and contributed funding to over 5,000 business and entrepreneurial projects. They have distributed €81.5million worth of direct financial assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs. They therefore play a crucial role in stimulating job creation in communities across the country (Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation, 2019).

13.1.2 Local Enterprise Office Trading Online Vouchers

Trading Online Vouchers are designed to assist small businesses with up to 10 employees to trade more online, boost sales and reach new markets. The scheme is provided through LEOs and offers financial assistance of up to €2,500 in addition to training and advice to support businesses trade online. It subsequently represents an important measure used by local authorities to support local businesses to develop online sales capabilities (Local Enterprise Office, 2020b).

13.1.3 Local Enterprise Office mentoring programme

The Mentor programme provided through LEOs is designed to align the knowledge, skills, insights, and entrepreneurial capability of experienced business practitioners with small business owner/ managers who require practical and strategic one-to-one expertise and guidance. The mentor contributes independent, informed observation and advice to support decision making across issues including business strategy, financial planning, market research, marketing and promotion, production planning, distribution, corporate organisation, and website planning and design (Local Enterprise Office, 2020a). The programme is therefore designed to ensure those who need to avail of expertise to develop their business have the opportunities to do so.

13.1.4 Tourism supports

The role local authorities play in tourism development includes developing, maintaining, and running attractions; providing leisure and tourism infrastructure; supporting festivals and events; developing and implementing tourism plans and policies; planning, place-making, and managing our natural and built environment, and working with communities, businesses, and other agencies to improve local tourism offerings.

The Tourism Action Plan 2016–2018 names local authorities as key contributors to increasing and supporting the role of tourism in Ireland, at both national and local levels. Each local authority was subsequently required to develop a tourism strategy under this plan to support tourism development within their administrative areas (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2016).

In addition, Tourism Officers posts were created in local authorities to provide a range of supports to tourism businesses and community groups to enhance tourist offerings. Specifically, they

work to develop and enhance visitor facilities and to generate tourism growth in order to provide economic benefits within specific local authorities. They are therefore a critical factor in ensuring tourism development across individual local authorities.

13.1.5 Conclusion

Sections 13.1.1-13.1.4 outlined current national policy in relation to local authority Economic Development. In this context, the following Economic Development topics are measured by NOAC annually as part of its Performance Indicators process:

- Local Enterprise Office job creation;
- Local Enterprise Office Trading Online Vouchers;
- Local Enterprise Office mentoring recipients; and
- Tourism supports.

Specific details of Performance Indicators related to the above Economic Development topics can be found in Table 13.1, with analysis provided in section 13.2. The Economic Development sub indicator has been subject to significant changes in methodologies between the years 2014 and 2019. Specifically, of the Economic Development areas where data is available, only 1 of the 6 sub indicators has used a consistent methodological approach and is therefore comparable over the last six years (2014-19).

Table 13.1: Economic Development Performance Indicators Data Availability 2014-2019

LEGEND KEY:		Consistent Methodology		No Data Collected			
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
J1	Number of Jobs Created						
	Number of jobs created with assistance from Local Enterprise Offices						
J2	Trading Online Vouchers						
	Number of trading online voucher applications approved by Local Enterprise Offices						
	Number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down						
J3	Number of Mentoring Recipients						
	Number of participants who received mentoring from Local Enterprise Offices						
J4	Tourism						
	Number of local authorities with a tourism strategy						
	Number of local authorities with a designated tourism officer						

13.2 Economic development related indicators

13.2.1 Number of Jobs Created

13.2.1.1 Number of jobs created with assistance from Local Enterprise Offices 2014-2019

The number of jobs created with assistance from LEOs decreased between 2014 and 2019. During these years, the number of jobs created increased sporadically from 3,479 in 2014 to 3,656 in 2018, before decreasing to 3,149 in 2019. Between 2014 and 2019, there has been an overall decrease in the number of jobs created: with a decrease of 330 or 9% from the 3,479 jobs created in 2014. In total, LEOs also supported the creation of some 20,044 jobs nationally during this period (Figure 13.1).

13.2.2 Trading Online Vouchers

13.2.2.1 Number of trading online voucher applications approved by Local Enterprise Offices 2016-2019

Between 2016 and 2019, there has been an overall increase in the number of trading online voucher applications approved by LEOs. Since 2016, the approval of trading online increased from 1,141 to 1,189 in 2017 before decreasing again to 1,107 in 2018. However, since 2018 the number of trading online application approved increased to 1,220 in 2019. This represents an overall increase of 79 or 7% from the 1,141 online trading vouchers applications approved in 2016. In total, LEOs have approved some 4,657 trading online voucher applications between 2016 and 2019 (Figure 13.2).

Figure 13.1: Number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Offices, 2014-19

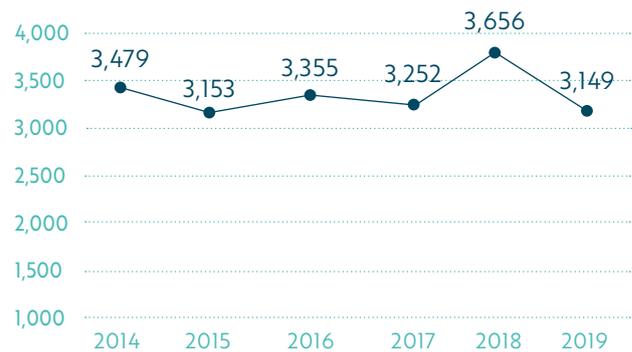


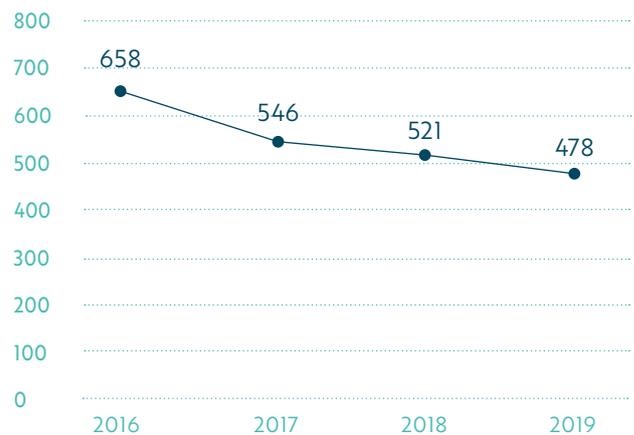
Figure 13.2: Number of trading online voucher applications approved by Local Enterprise Offices, 2016-19



13.2.2.2 Number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down 2016-2019⁵⁹

The number of trading online voucher applications drawn down decreased annually between 2016 and 2019. In 2019, 478 trading vouchers were drawn down. This represents a decrease of 180 or 27% in the number of trading online vouchers drawn down between 2016 and 2019. In total, 2,203 trading vouchers were drawn down during these years (Figure 13.3).

Figure 13.3: Number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down, 2016-19



13.2.3 Number of Mentoring Recipients

13.2.3.1 Number of participants who received mentoring from Local Enterprise Offices 2016-2019

The number of participants who received mentoring from LEOs increased annually between 2016 and 2019. In 2019, 10,756 participants received mentoring from LEOs: increasing by 3,192 or 42% from 7,564 in 2016. In total, LEOs provided mentoring to some 36,338 participants between 2016 and 2019 (Figure 13.4).

Figure 13.4: Number of participants who received mentoring from Local Enterprise Offices, 2016-19

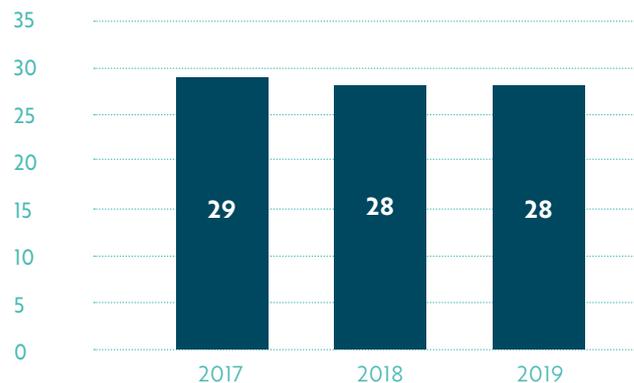


13.2.4 Tourism

13.2.4.1 Number of local authorities with a tourism strategy 2017-2019

The number of local authorities with a designated tourism strategy decreased marginally between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, 28 local authorities had a tourism strategy, decreasing from 29 in 2017 (Figure 13.5).

Figure 13.5: Number of Local Authorities with a tourism strategy, 2017-19



⁵⁹ NOAC Guidance Notes

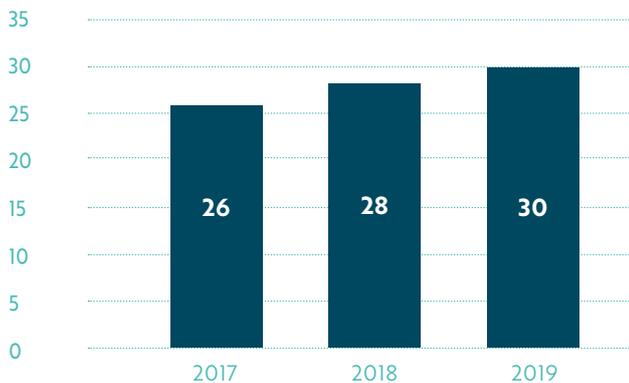
2016

- The figures for 2016 relate to 2015 and 2016 approvals for the following local authorities:
 - Carlow County Council,
 - Cavan County Council,
 - Galway County Council,
 - Kilkenny County Council,
 - Longford County Council,
 - Louth County Council,
 - Mayo County Council,
 - Roscommon County Council,
 - Waterford City & County Council,
 - Wicklow County Council.

13.2.4.2 Number of local authorities with a designated tourism officer 2017-2019

The number of local authorities with a designated tourism officer increased between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, 30 Local Authorities had a designated tourism officer: increasing from 26 in 2017 (Figure 13.6).

Figure 13.6: Number of Local Authorities with a designated tourism officer, 2017-19



13.3 Summary

In the context of NOAC Performance Indicators, Economic Development sub indicator themes have been subject to significant changes in methodologies between the years 2014 and 2019. Specifically, of the Economic Development areas where data is available, only 1 of the 6 sub indicators has used a consistent methodological approach and is therefore comparable over the last six years (2014-19).

In terms of job creation, the number of jobs created with assistance from LEOs decreased by 9% between 2014-2019. Similarly, in terms of mentoring businesses, the number of participants who received mentoring from LEOs increased by 42% between the years 2016 and 2019.

In terms of the trading online voucher applications, the number approved by LEOs, the number of applications approved by LEOs increased by 7% between the years 2016 and 2019. However, the number of trading online voucher applications drawn down has declined steadily by 27% during these years (2016-19).

14. Summary and Conclusions

14.1 Introduction

This report set out to examine local government sectoral trends across all functional areas between 2014-2019 through an analysis of existing data within the NOAC annual Performance Indicator reports. This is the first time a comprehensive and methodical analysis of sectoral trends has been undertaken since NOAC assumed a statutory auditing responsibility over the local government sector under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (Government of Ireland, 2014a). Across 11 key local government functional areas (Housing, Roads, Water, Waste/Environment, Planning, Fire Services, Library/Recreation, Youth/Community, Corporate, Finance and Economic Development) this report examined local authorities' performance through an analysis of 37 indicators and 87 sub indicators between 2014-2019. The key findings are now summarised.

14.2 Overall Local Government Sector Performance

Table 14.1 provides a summary of the of the methodological consistencies and breaks in the performance indicator data collection from 2014 to 2019. In the sections that follow, a summary of results where methodological consistencies were evident across sub indicators for the entire 2014-2019 period, or where the indicator was introduced midway through this period and remained methodologically consistent, are presented.

Table 14.1: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19

LEGEND KEY:		Consistent Methodology		Break in Methodology		No Data Collected	
Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
H1	Social Housing Stock						
1	Number of dwellings provided by local authorities	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected
2	Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at start of year	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
3	Number of dwellings directly added (i.e., constructed or purchased) by local authorities to housing stock	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
4	Number of dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
5	Number of social housing dwellings in local authorities at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected
6	Number of directly provided (i.e., constructed or purchased) social housing dwellings in the ownership of local authorities at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
7	Number of local authority owned dwellings sold in year	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology
8	Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
9	Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under D/HLGH approved scheme	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	No Data Collected	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H2	Housing Vacancies						
10	Percentage of local authority owned dwellings vacant at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H3	Average Re-letting Time and Costs						
11	Time taken (weeks) from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in year when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology
12	Cost expended (€) on getting dwellings re-tenanted ready for re-letting, averaged across all dwellings re-let in that year	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology
H4	Housing Maintenance Cost						
13	Expenditure (€) during year on the repair and maintenance of housing bought or built by local authorities complied on a continuous basis from 1 January to 31 December in that year, divided by the number of directly provided dwellings in the local authority stock at year-end	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Break in Methodology	Consistent Methodology	Consistent Methodology

Table 14.1: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
H5	Private Rented Sector Inspections					
14	Number of registered tenancies in local authorities					
15	Number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities					
16	Percentage of inspected dwellings that were non-compliant with Standards Regulations					
17	Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant					
H6	Long-term Homeless Adults					
18	Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e., 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at year-end					
R1	Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) Ratings					
19	Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary, (c) local secondary and (d) local tertiary roads that have ever received a PSCI rating					
20	Percentage of (a) regional, (b) local primary and (c) local secondary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24-month period prior to year-end and (d) local tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 60-month period prior to year-end					
21	Percentage of regional roads that received a PSCI rating					
22	Percentage of (a) regional road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories					
23	Percentage of (b) local primary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories					
24	Percentage of (c) local secondary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories					
25	Percentage of (d) local tertiary road kilometres in each of the 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories					
R2	Road Works					
26	Kilometres of regional roads strengthened					
27	Cost expended (€) on regional road strengthening					
28	Kilometres of regional roads resealed					
29	Cost expended (€) on regional road resealing					

Table 14.1: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
R2	Road Works					
30	Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthened					
31	Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) strengthening					
32	Kilometres of local roads (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealed					
33	Cost expended (€) on local road (i.e., total of primary, secondary, and tertiary) resealing					
R3	Percentage of Motor Tax Transactions Conducted Online					
34	Percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online					
W1	Drinking Water in Private Schemes in Compliance with Statutory Requirements					
35	Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements					
E1	Number/Percentage of Households Availing of a 3-Bin Service					
36	Number of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end					
37	Percentage of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service at year-end					
E2	Environmental Pollution Complaints					
38	Number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made					
39	Number of pollution cases closed					
40	Number of pollution cases on hand at year-end					
E3	Percentage of Local Authority Areas Within the 5 Levels of Litter Pollution					
41	Percentage of area within local authorities that when surveyed was (1) unpolluted or litter free, (2) slightly polluted, (3) moderately polluted, (4) significantly polluted and (5) grossly polluted					
E4	Green Flags for Schools					
42	Percentage of schools awarded Green Flag status					
P1	New Buildings Inspected					
43	Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to local authorities					

Table 14.1: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
P2	Number of Planning Decisions Confirmed by An Bord Pleanála					
44	Number of planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board					
45	Percentage of An Bord Pleanála determinations which confirmed (either with or without variation) the decision made by local authorities					
P3	Percentage of Planning Enforcement Cases Closed as Resolved					
46	Number of planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated					
47	Number of planning cases closed					
48	Percentage of planning cases that were dismissed under section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development					
49	Percentage of investigated planning cases resolved to local authorities' satisfaction through negotiations					
50	Percentage of investigated planning cases that were closed due to enforcement proceedings					
51	Number of planning cases being investigated at year-end					
P4	Cost per Capita of Planning Service					
52	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of local authorities per the census					
P5	Applications for Fire Safety Certificates					
53	Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt					
54	Percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant					
F1	Cost per Capita of Planning Service					
55	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data divided by the population of local authorities per the census figures for the population served by fire authorities					

Table 14.1: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
F2	Service Mobilisation					
56	Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of fire					
57	Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in full-time and part-time stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents					
F3	Percentage Attendance Times at Scenes					
58	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes					
59	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes					
60	Percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes					
61	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes					
62	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes					
63	Percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at scene is after 20 minutes					
L1	Library Visits and Issues					
64	Number of library visits per head of population					
65	Number of library items issued to borrowers					
L2	Cost per Capita of Operating a Library Service					
66	Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data divided by the population of local authorities per the census					
Y1	Participation in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme					
67	Percentage of local schools involved in local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme					
Y2	Groups Associated with the Public Participation Network (PPN)					
68	Number of organisations included in the county registers at year-end and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN					
C1	Number of Whole-Time Equivalent Employees					
69	Whole-Time Equivalent employees in local authorities at year-end					

Table 14.1: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
C2	Working Days Lost to Sickness					
70	Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave					
71	Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave					
C3	Local Authorities' Websites and Social Media Use					
72	Page views of local authorities' websites					
73	Number of followers of local authorities' social media accounts at year-end					
C4	Cost of ICT Provision per Whole-Time Equivalent Employee					
74	Cost (€) ICT expenditure divided by Whole-Time Equivalent number					
C5	Overall cost of ICT as a proportion of Revenue expenditure					
75	All ICT expenditure calculated as a proportion of Revenue expenditure					
M1	Six-Year Summary of Revenue Account Balance					
76	Cumulative surplus/deficit balance of local authorities at year-end in the Revenue Accounts from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS)					
77	Cumulative surplus/deficit at year-end as a percentage of Total Income from the Income and Expenditure Account Statements of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS)					
78	Revenue expenditure per capita (€)					
M2	Six-Year Summary of % Collection Levels for Major Revenue Sources					
79	Median percentage collection figures for (a) Rates					
80	Median percentage collection figures for (b) Rents & Annuities					
81	Median percentage collection figures for (c) Housing Loans					
J1	Number of Jobs Created					
82	Number of jobs created with assistance from Local Enterprise Offices					
J2	Trading Online Vouchers					
83	Number of trading online voucher applications approved by Local Enterprise Offices					
84	Number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down					

Table 14.1: Details of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19 (continued)

Indicator		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
J3	Number of Mentoring Recipients						
85	Number of participants who received mentoring from Local Enterprise Offices						
J4	Tourism						
86	Number of local authorities with a tourism strategy						
87	Number of local authorities with a designated tourism officer						

14.2.1 Housing

Local government performance across social housing stock and housing vacancy indicators generally improved over the period of analysis. Sectoral improvements were also achieved in terms of a reduction in average re-letting time of social housing dwellings and social housing maintenance costs between 2014-2019. The number of registered tenancies across local government also increased during the period, with the corresponding number of rented dwellings inspected by local authorities also increasing between 2014-2019.

Conversely, the percentage of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that were long-term homeless relative to the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation also increased during the period.

14.2.2 Roads

In terms of PSCI ratings, the quality of regional, local primary, local secondary and local tertiary roads generally improved nationally between 2014-2019. Moreover, between 2015-2019 the number of kilometres of regional road both strengthened and resealed increased nationally. Similarly, between 2017-2019 the number of kilometres of local roads (i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary roads) both strengthened and resealed also increased nationally.

14.2.3 Water

Overall, the percentage of drinking water in private water schemes in compliance with statutory requirements deteriorated slightly between 2015-2019.

14.2.4 Waste/Environment

With respect to the number/percentage of households availing of a 3-bin service, sectoral performance improved between the period 2014-2019. Similarly, local authorities reported an increase in the percentage of households situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3-bin service between 2014-2019.

In terms of environmental pollution complaints, the number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made increased between 2014-2019. Conversely, an increase in both the number of pollution cases closed and on-hand at year-end were also recorded during these years.

Litter pollution performance generally improved between the years 2014 and 2019 across the sector. For instance, the percentage of areas within local authorities which were unpolluted or litter free increased during these years, whilst the percentage of areas within local authorities which were both slightly polluted and moderately polluted decreased. The percentage of areas within local authorities which were significantly polluted remained static at 1%, with areas which were grossly polluted remaining negligible between 2014 and 2019.

14.2.5 Planning

In terms of planning decisions confirmed by An Bord Pleanála, the number of local authorities' planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board increased between 2014-2019. Equally, the percentage of determinations of An Bord Pleanála which confirmed the decision made by local authorities also increased between 2014 and 2019.

In the context of planning enforcement cases closed as resolved, the performance of local authorities improved in some respects and deteriorated somewhat across other aspects. For instance, the number of planning cases referred to or initiated by local authorities that were investigated increased between the years 2014 and 2019. However, the number of planning cases closed only increased marginally during the same period. The percentage of planning cases that were dismissed under section 152(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred, or an exempted development also increased between 2014-2019. Similarly, the percentage of investigated planning cases that were closed due to enforcement proceedings increased between 2014-2019.

Notwithstanding, the percentage of planning cases being investigated at year-end also increased between 2014 and 2019. Equally, the percentage of investigated planning cases which were resolved to local authorities' satisfaction through negotiations decreased between 2014-2019. With respect to new buildings inspected, a decrease in the proportion of buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to local authorities was reported across the local government sector during these years. Finally, cost per capita of planning services increased nationally between 2014-2019.

14.2.6 Fire Services

In the context of fire service mobilisation with respect to fire emergencies, local authorities that operate full-time fire stations recorded an improvement in the time taken to mobilise fire units between 2014-2019. Conversely, for those local authorities operating part-time fire stations, performance remained relatively stable

during the same period, with the time taken to mobilise fire units in part-time fire stations improved marginally between 2014-2019 for fire emergencies. With respect to fire service mobilisation for non-fire emergencies, local authorities operating both full-time and part-time fire services recorded an improvement in the time taken to mobilise fire units between 2014-2019 for non-fire emergencies.

In relation to attendance at fire scenes, local authority performance deteriorated slightly over the six-year period of analysis, with the percentage of fire cases in which first attendance at the scene within 10 minutes decreasing between the years 2014 and 2019. For non-fire cases, local authority performance related to attendance at non-fire scenes also deteriorated somewhat during these years. Specifically, the percentage of non-fire cases in which first attendance at the scene was within 10 minutes decreased between 2014-2019. Finally, in the context of fire service expenditure cost per capita of fire services increased during these years.

14.2.7 Library/Recreation Services

In terms of library visits and issues, the number of library visits per head of population decreased between 2014-2019, whilst the cost per capita of library services increased during the same period.

14.2.8 Youth/Community

The percentage of local schools involved in the Comhairle na nÓg scheme increased between 2014 and 2019. However, the number of organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN as a proportion of the number of organisations included in the county registers at year-end decreased moderately across the six-year period of analysis.

14.2.9 Corporate

The number of Whole-Time Equivalent (WTE) employees in local authorities increased between the years 2014 and 2019. In terms of working days lost to sickness, the percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified sick leave increased marginally during these years, whilst the

percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified sick leave remained relatively stable during the period. With respect to local authorities' websites and social media usage, total page views of local authorities' websites increased between 2014 and 2019. Moreover, the number of followers of local authorities' social media accounts also increased during these years.

14.2.10 Finance

The cumulative balance of local authorities at year-end in their Revenue Accounts from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) increased between 2014-2019. More specifically, the cumulative surplus balance of local authorities as a percentage of local authorities' total income also increased between 2015-2019.

Performance improvements were also recorded by the sector in terms of percentage collection levels of major revenue sources (Rates, Rents & Annuities, Housing Loans) during the 2014-2019 period.

14.2.11 Economic Development

In terms of job creation, the number of jobs created with assistance from LEOs decreased between the years 2014 and 2019. Conversely, in terms of mentoring businesses, the number of participants who received mentoring from LEOs also increased during these years.

The number of trading online voucher applications approved by LEOs increased between the years 2016 and 2019. However, the number of trading online voucher applications drawn down decreased during these years.

14.3 Consistency of Indicators

From a methodological standpoint, a notable finding of this research is that of the 87 sub indicators for which data was captured across local authorities between the years 2014 and 2019, full data across this period of analysis exists for 49 (56%) of the sub indicators (9 Housing, 5 Roads, 5 Waste/Environment, 9 Planning, 9 Fire Services, 2 Library/Recreation Services, 1 Youth/Community, 4 Corporate, 4 Finance and 1 Economic Development).

Moreover, the methodological changes introduced within these sub indicators mid-way through the six-year period, even where data exists across the 2014-2019 period of analysis, means that trends in performance cannot be accurately compared over time for all these sub indicators. As detailed in Table 14.2 below, of the 49 indicators that had been in place over the entire period (Column 1 + Column 2), 6 were modified significantly so that trend data was interrupted. This has impacted the theme of housing more than other areas with 5 of the 9 sub indicators undergoing some form of methodological change during the period. As a result, annual results across these Housing sub indicators are not comparable over the period.

There is a significant reliance on existing data by NOAC when selecting indicators rather than asking local authorities to develop new systems to gather new or additional data. This is a pragmatic and positive methodological decision as local authorities have reported that between 20 and 30 staff members across more than 12 different departments are involved in gathering

Table 14.2: Summary of Performance Measurement Indicator Changes, 2014-19

Number of original consistent indicators 2014-2019 and still in use	Number of original modified indicators 2014-2019 and still in use	Number of original indicators discontinued during period	Number of new indicators introduced during period and still in use	Number of new indicators introduced during period modified and still in use	Number of new indicators introduced but discontinued during period	Total
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	
43	6	2	23	11	2	87
49%	7%	2%	26%	13%	2%	100%

Note: due to rounding the total percentage figure may not sum up to 100%.

the data for entry, validation, and approval on the central data collection system LGReturns. This equates to approximately 190 workdays cumulatively gathering data (LGMA, 2020) (Business Plan for Central Data Unit).

Given this, it is understandable that some indicators change in response to better or more relevant data becoming available. Also, some of the changes are as a consequence of audit meetings with local authorities where it became clear that not all data was interpreted or collected in the same way across all local authorities, so more clarification was needed which resulted in changes to returns in some local authorities.

However, there is one interesting observation. Over the course of the six years reviewed, there were 36 'new' indicators introduced (Column 4 + Column 5 + Column 6), of which 2 were discontinued and 11 were modified. This compares with modifications to 6 and removal of 2 of the 'original' 51 indicators (Column 1 + Column 2 + Column 3). Therefore, there is a higher rate of modification to new indicators than the original indicators. This is an issue that should be investigated further. It is possible that indicators are being rolled-out without being agreed and tested adequately resulting in a need to modify or remove in subsequent years.

While the need for changes to indicators is understood, it is also recognised that consistent indicators facilitate review and analysis of trend data in which variances can be attributed to performance related issues rather than methodological changes.

14.4 Limitations

A notable finding of this research is that of the 87 sub indicators for which data was captured across local authorities between 2014-2019, full data across this period only exists for 49 (56%) of the sub indicators (9 Housing, 5 Roads, 5 Waste/Environment, 9 Planning, 9 Fire Services, 2 Library/Recreation Services, 1 Youth/Community, 4 Corporate, 4 Finance and 1 Economic Development).

Indeed, even where data exists between 2014-2019 across individual sub indicators, methodological changes in these sub indicators midway through the six-year period means that trends in performance cannot be accurately compared over time for all of these sub indicators. For instance, in relation to the Housing sub indicators where full data exists over the period, only 4 of these sub indicators did not undergo some form of methodological change during the period. Many of the changes in these methodologies are significant to the extent that annual results across these Housing sub indicators are not comparable over the period. With respect to Roads, of the sub indicators where full data exists between 2014-2019, methodologies remained consistent over the period for only 4 of the sub indicators. In relation to the Waste/Environment sub indicators, full data only exists for 5 of these sub indicators, which are comparable and methodological consistent across the six-year period of analysis. In terms of the planning sub indicators, where all six years of data is available, full data only exists for 9 out of the 12 sub indicators. This data is comparable due to none or relatively minor modifications to the methodological process during these years. Similarly, with respect to Fire services all 9 sub indicators are comparable over the period of analysis due to consistent methodologies used. For Libraries/Recreation Services, full data exists for 2 indicators out of the 3 sub indicators which are comparable over the 2014-2019 due to a consistent methodological approach been taken. Similarly, for Youth/Community the use of a consistent measurement means that full data exists for 1 indicator (out of 2 sub indicators) which is comparable across the six-year period of analysis. In terms of Corporate, while 3 new

indicators were introduced, the methodology of 4 indicators out of 7 sub indicators remained consistent between 2014 and 2019. Where Finance indicators are concerned, 4 out of the 6 sub indicators are comparable due to methodological consistencies between 2014-2019. Finally, in relation to Economic Development, full data exists for 1 sub indicator (out of 6 sub indicators) which is comparable over the six-year period of analysis due to methodology consistencies over time.

Specifically, these results equate to comparable data for only 43 of the 49 sub indicators (88%) for which six years of data exists. Taken more broadly however across all 87 sub indicators developed by NOAC, comparable data over a six-year period of analysis only exists for only 43 (49%) of the sub indicators. Moreover, even where data exists for a shorter period of time than the 2014-2019 period assessed in this report, methodological changes midway through the period means that current sub indicators may not lend themselves to future comparability across years.

Both the lack of available data for the entire 2014-2019 period and repeated methodological changes, even where six years of data was available, poses a significant challenge for the sector if local authority performance is to be assessed accurately. Without a more consistent approach in NOAC Performance Indicator methodologies the local government sector is likely to find it difficult to identify strategic solutions aimed at addressing issues of under-performance identified by NOAC across particular functional areas.

14.5 Conclusion

The results presented herein provide an important insight into the performance of local authorities over a six-year period since NOAC assumed statutory responsibility for auditing local government in 2014. This report subsequently represents overall aggregated sectoral performance across each of the aforementioned 11 functional areas. Whilst the sector has broadly improved performance across many key functional areas, there remains scope at a sectoral wide level to improve performance in certain areas of service provision.

However, perhaps more importantly the results demonstrate the challenges for the sector as a whole and for individual local authorities in using NOAC Performance Indicator data to identify strategic priority areas and for improving performance. A more consistent methodological approach across NOAC Performance Indicators in the future would assist the sector to utilise current or future data to inform and improve overall performance.

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