



13th January, 2021.

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

RE: LOCAL AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2019

Dear Councillor,

The National Oversight and Audit Committee [NOAC] has published a full report on the Local Authority Performance Indicators for 2019 on 17th December, 2020. Each Local Authority reported on 39 indicators which covered a wide range of the services carried out in the areas of:

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

The Performance Indicators for all Local Authorities which includes the 39 Indicators in respect of Kilkenny County Council is available for viewing on the NOAC Website. www.noac.ie.

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

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

NOAC selects a number of local authorities for review each year. Kilkenny County Council was not part of the Review in 2019.

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

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

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

In particular, Kilkenny County Council has over the last few years increased the percentage collection levels in rates, housing rents and housing loans. Kilkenny County Council has the second highest percentage level of collection in rates in the country. Improvement in the collection of housing loans has been achieved over the last five years. The commitment of staff in achieving these high levels of collection must be recognised and acknowledged. Due to the limited areas available to bring in additional income, the Council will continue to focus on reducing the arrears on housing rents and housing loans during 2021.

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

COLLECTION OF INCOME - KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL						
Year	Rates	National Average	Rent	National Average	Housing Loan	National Average
2015	92%	80%	92%	88%	82%	70%
2016	94%	82%	93%	88%	80%	70%
2017	95%	82%	92%	89%	85%	74%
2018	93%	86%	93%	89%	88%	75%
2019	94%	87%	95%	90%	90%	78%

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

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

Areas targeted for improvement do not include demand led services where client circumstances and regulatory requirements dictate the data reviewed. For example, it would not be considered appropriate to set targets in the provision of homeless services where the response of the Local Authority will be commensurate on demand presented and the associated social issues. However this does not mean that the Council will not continue to provide a quality service to the clients who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. The number of homeless varies from month to month and we have seen a reduction in these numbers over the last year which is greatly welcomed.

The 2019 indicators have been reviewed by the Council's Management Team. There was a focus on further improvements in the performance of Kilkenny County Council during 2019 in the following areas:

- *Cost of housing maintenance:* The average cost incurred by Kilkenny County Council in repair and maintenance on LA housing in 2019 was €1,148.96. The average cost across all local authorities was €1,168.99. It is essential that we deliver an efficient service to our tenants while also achieving value for money within the budget provided. We will continue to review the operation of our maintenance service with a view to getting maximum benefit from the budget available to carry out the maintenance works.

- *3 bin service:* The percentage of households availing of a 3 bin service in County Kilkenny published for 2019 is 25.45%. This is an improvement on the year 2018. The national average in 2019 is 48.36%. As this service is privatised, Kilkenny County Council will continue to encourage the provision of the 3 bin service with the service providers. The new Waste Regulations and Bye Laws will assist us in achieving a higher percentage in the next few years.

It should be noted that there are 9,528 households in Co. Kilkenny in agglomerations of 500 households or more. Therefore, the actual percentage of householders availing of a 3 bin service in Co. Kilkenny based on the qualifying households is 64.2%. This would be above the national average.

In August 2020, Kilkenny County Council made a submission to NOAC on how the performance in this area is calculated. NOAC has agreed to revisit the methodology in 2021.

A new Waste/Environment indicator to establish the % of energy savings since the baseline year was added in 2019. Kilkenny County Council made 34% of energy savings. The national average for 2019 is 27.81%.

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

Due to the high demand for social housing we will endeavour to minimise the reletting period of our own stock. Our average time in 2019 was 21.4 weeks. The turnaround time will be examined with a view to reducing this despite being below the national average.

Subject to Covid restrictions, the Council will focus on increasing our inspections regime on new buildings notified. Responsibility for compliance with the Building Control Regulations rests with the owner of the building or works, and with any builder or designer engaged by the owner. We are reviewing our inspection programme for 2021 and for future years.

I attach, herewith, statement issued by Mr. Michael McCarthy, Chairperson of NOAC on the publication of the 2019 Report.

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

Yours sincerely,



Tim Butler
Director of Services
Corporate Services

Report finds 2019 performance of Kilkenny County Council was mixed

- Independent oversight body identified several areas of improvement and concern across Ireland's local government sector –

17 December 2020: A report by the independent watchdog of local government has revealed the performance of Kilkenny County Council in 2019 across eleven areas. The annual report, by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC), found the Council delivered mixed results in a range of areas including housing, the environment and financial management.

Some of the key findings in the report include:

- **Housing:** Kilkenny County Council owned 2388 social housing dwellings at end of 2019 with 1.51% vacant. The average time for rehousing in vacant properties was 21 weeks.
- **Finance:** The level of collection of commercial rates was 94% and the level of housing loans collection was 90%.
- **Environment:** 25% of the Council's area is unpolluted or litter-free while energy savings made since 2009 is 34%.
- **Fire service:** Attendance at the scene in respect of fire within 10 minutes was 31%, and 58% within 20 minutes.
- **Public Libraries:** There were an average of 2.74 visits per head of population and 290,800 items issued to library borrowers in 2019.

Commenting on the publication of the report, Chairman of NOAC, Michael McCarthy, said: "This report highlights some of the important work our local authorities carry out each year. We would encourage all local authorities and public representatives to review the report to learn ways they can continue to help local communities thrive. Local government plays an important role in people's lives and as we look beyond the pandemic, NOAC is looking forward to working with all stakeholders to build on this work."

Michael McCarthy concluded by thanking local authority staff, the LGMA, and all organisations who provided or reviewed data for NOAC's 2019 Annual Report.

The NOAC uses 39 indicators across eleven areas to measure local authority performance. The data is submitted by the local authorities and other State and regulatory bodies.

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