

## **Appointments to the National Oversight and Audit Commission Information Note**

In accordance with provision in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr. Phil Hogan TD, invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced persons interested in being appointed as members of the National Oversight and Audit Commission and to the position of Chairperson of the National Oversight and Audit Commission. The Chairperson and Commission Members will be appointed in a non-executive capacity.

### **National Oversight and Audit Commission**

#### **Background Information**

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 (the Act) gave legislative effect to proposals set out in the [\*Action Programme for Effective Local Government\*](#) which, inter alia, set out Government policy for a range of reforms to the local government system including structures, functions, funding, operational arrangements and governance designed to strengthen local government.

Given the importance to ensure that local authorities perform their responsibilities and deliver their services as efficiently and effectively as possible and that their performance in this regard is monitored and reported on in a transparent manner, both the *Action Programme* and the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provide a number of mechanisms to ensure a robust and accountable reporting methodology in respect of local authority performance.

[Section 61](#) of the Act (which inserts a new Part 12A into the Local Government Act 2001) provides for the establishment of a National Oversight and Audit Commission for Local Government (NOAC).

The NOAC will scrutinise local government performance, in fulfilling national, regional and local mandates, scrutinise value for money where State funds are channelled through local government, and will support the development of best practice and enhanced efficiency in the performance of local government functions.

The membership of the Commission, which will have an independent chair, will comprise members with expertise in local government, finance, audit, corporate governance and customer service.

It will report to the Minister and to other relevant Ministers in respect of services within their areas of responsibility discharged by local government bodies, which include local authorities, regional assemblies, and any trust or other body where a local authority or regional assembly exercises actual or effective control. Reports will also be made available to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht; and, as appropriate, to other Joint Oireachtas Committees with oversight responsibilities for the relevant policy areas.

## **Functions of the Commission**

The main elements of the local government system that will be subject to scrutiny include:-

1. Performance generally and by individual authorities by reference to performance indicators (which the Commission considers it appropriate to refer to or which the Minister may specify in regulations)
2. Financial performance and value for money, including in relation the financial resources available to local authorities, whether raised directly through own resources or provided by the Exchequer,
3. Identification and dissemination of best practice,
4. Adherence to Service Level Agreements (SLA). It would be open to a Minister responsible for a function discharged by the sector via a SLA to ask the NOAC to examine performance, generally or individually, in relation to the SLA,
5. Delivery of national policy and national policy objectives,
6. Implementation of public sector reform and efficiency measures,
7. Monitoring the adequacy and delivery of corporate plans,
8. Preparation of reports for relevant Ministers and on its own initiative.

It is envisaged that the Commission will meet on a regular basis as determined by the members, but at least quarterly, with meetings being more frequent in the initial period to allow for preparation/ adoption of an agreed work programme.

## **Membership of the Commission**

Membership of the NOAC will require a balance across a number of areas of expertise relevant to the services provided by local authorities, and the quality of their delivery. While there is to be local government expertise on the NOAC to provide a perspective from within the sector, to ensure the Commission is sufficiently independent, a majority of the members be made up of expertise outside of the public sector.

### *Chairperson of the Commission*

The chairperson of the Commission will be appointed by the Minister. The chairperson should have a good understanding of the Public Service generally and a proven track record of best practice service provision and value for money auditing.

The statutory membership balance is set out below. The Commission shall include one or more persons having a knowledge or experience of;

- local government affairs
- finance, audit, evaluation or project assessment
- business, commerce, administration, corporate governance, community development
- statutory or voluntary bodies dealing with consumer affairs

The membership of the Commission shall also include an officer of the Minister and may include one employee of a local authority and one member of a local authority (but shall not include a member of a regional assembly). Including the Chair, the Commission will consist of between 6 and 9 members.

In selecting the members of the NOAC, due regard will be given to Government policy on gender balance on State Boards.

### **Details of Appointment**

The roles and responsibilities of State Board Members are described in the [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2009](#).

Each member of the Commission shall hold office for a period which the Minister shall determine, not exceeding 5 years from the date of appointment to the office.

Members will be required to devote as much time to duties on the Board as is necessary for the proper and efficient discharge of their duties, and to comply with the relevant provisions of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Travel and subsistence allowances will be paid in line with Government guidelines for the civil service.

### **Chairperson**

Persons being proposed for appointment as chairperson of the Commission may be required to make himself or herself available to the appropriate Oireachtas Committee to discuss the approach which they will take to their role as chairperson and their views about the future contribution of the Commission, prior to the final decision by the Minister to appoint a chairperson. Following that discussion, decisions will be taken by the Minister to confirm the nominee as chairperson.

### **Additional Information**

It should also be noted that Commission members on appointment assume significant duties such as responsibility for the proper conduct of the Commission's affairs, to hold information obtained in their role as Commission member confidential and to act in accordance with public policy and high standards of probity.

In order to qualify for appointment a person must not have any conflicts of interest likely to interfere with his/her ability to play a full part on the Commission.

### **How to apply**

Anyone interested in being considered for appointment as a Commission member should submit an application, together with a detailed curriculum vitae not exceeding 3 pages to the Department directly by e-mail to [NOACmembers@environ.ie](mailto:NOACmembers@environ.ie). Expressions of interest are also being advertised on the website [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie).

Applicants should indicate whether they wish to be considered for the position of Chairperson of the Commission.

In submitting expressions of interest, applicants should also set out clearly any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise should they be appointed to the Commission.

**Closing Date for Applications**

By submitting an expression of interest the applicant accepts that appointments are made in the exercise of a statutory discretion, that the Minister is not obliged to consider the expressions of interest offered, that he is not confined to recommending an appointment from amongst those who have expressed an interest and is not bound by any statement set out in the notice.

Applications will be accepted up to and including Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014.

Results will be posted on **[www.viron.ie](http://www.environ.ie)**. We will treat all applications/expressions of interest confidentially and information will only be given to the appropriate personnel.