

## Minutes of Board Meeting LGMA

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 at 11:00am

Teams

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### Attendees:

- Ms J Maguire (Chair)
- Mr O Keegan
- Mr T Lucey
- Mr B McGrath
- Mr T Enright
- Mr M Walsh
- Ms M Hurley
- Ms S Neary

### In Attendance:

Mr P Dunne  
Ms M Kelly  
Ms E McEaney  
Ms. K O'Donnell, IPA

**Apologies:** Ms C Byrne  
Mr E O'Sullivan

Following consultation, no member expressed conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda.

### External review of the Board

The Chair welcomed Ms. Kate O'Donnell, IPA as an observer at the meeting. Board members introduced themselves to Ms. O'Donnell. It was noted that the observation by the IPA is the first step in the external review of the Board. The external review is being undertaken in compliance with a requirement under section 4.6 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies which requires that an external evaluation of Board members be carried out at least every three years. Board members will be interviewed as part of this process. Dr. Tom Ward, IPA will present a final report on this evaluation to the Board at the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### 1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2021 were approved and were signed by the Chairperson.

### 2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 3. Chief Executive Report

The meeting noted the report which was circulated in advance. A number of issues were discussed and highlighted as follows.

The Grade 8 Data Scientist Lead, commenced with the Central Data Unit project on August 23rd, 2021, and the Grade 7 Project Coordinator is due to commence on October 4th, 2021. Recruitment of six additional staff is underway and it is anticipated that the full team will be in place by year end.

The national Awareness Survey was administered in July 2021 and work is currently underway on analysing the data. The sample size was 1,744, with all local authorities being proportionally represented in the sample.

The 2020 Performance Indicators report is due to be published by NOAC at the end of September 2021. This year a narrative will be included in the introduction section outlining the additional services local authorities provided in response to the COVID19 pandemic. The NOAC Annual Good Practice Event is scheduled for the 9th of November in Kilkenny.

The Government announcement on the Covid-19 Response Plan on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 will enable the library sector to provide normal services from 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021. My Open Library services can resume from 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021.

iHouse 3.7 was released and completed on schedule, followed by 2 subsequent patch releases. Complete end-user testing is a necessity in each local authority.

The DHLGH have agreed to 100% fund four additional staff resources for the HDCO, these posts have been advertised (secondments from sector) and interviews are scheduled for early October. Gratitude was expressed to DHLGH for the funding of these additional posts.

The Quarter 2 statistics for the week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 for the Small Business Assistance Scheme indicated 2,562 applications received in quarter 2. The total value of applications processed is €9.23 million.

A total of €715.4 million has been processed in respect of the NPPR charge up to 31st August 2021. To date in 2021, a total of €19.6 million has been processed and this represents 75% of the total sum processed in the full year 2020 (€26.14 million). Part of the "surge" in payments processed is due to local authorities paying over money previously collected locally in respect of 2009 Agreements.

The LGMA issued two draft Blended Working documents to Chief Executives in July, these comprised a general blended working policy document and a blended working framework document. The draft documents were for consideration and consultation and the LGMA has welcomed feedback on their contents. The LGMA has also commenced engagement with Directors of Service on the blended working framework.

The Local Government Building Momentum Oversight group met on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to finalise its report to the Secretary General of the DHLGH on progress delivery of the sectoral action plan in respect of the 1% increase due in October 2021.

The HPSS Programme update noted that 23 sites are now live on Version 28. MyPay onboarding of local authorities is in progress with Cork County Council scheduled to Go Live in April 2022.

The PSROG met as scheduled on 9<sup>th</sup> September where the outcome of the Peer Review of the Business Case for localgov.ie was endorsed and the project was approved to proceed. Discussions on funding is ongoing. The updated Local Government Shared Services report was also approved for circulation. Both documents have been circulated to the CCMA.

Since 6<sup>th</sup> September, all LGMA staff have returned to office-based work one day per week in Local

Government House. This return is on a pillar basis and the days rotate on a four-weekly basis with Friday available for ad-hoc necessary meetings. Due to the non-availability of Phoenix House presently due to the ongoing refurbishment, this one day per week system will continue until the completion of the refurbishment work at year end.

LGMA staff were surveyed on their experience of remote working. Responses were very positive in relation to support from management and organisation communication.

A performance and accountability meeting with the DHLGH is scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> of September.

An update on the transition of water services from the Local Authority sector to Irish Water was provided to the Board. There will be a return to the WRC in October. It was agreed that the LGMA and the DHLGH would continue to work together to progress the outstanding issues as a priority.

A discussion centred on how to promote and publicise the positive role of the local authority sector during the pandemic. It was agreed that the LGMA and the DHLGH would consider this matter further.

The Chair commended the LGMA on behalf of the sector for the provision of services without disruption during the remote working arrangement.

Following discussion, it was recommended that the LGMA investigate options for hybrid meetings and associated technology for the LGH Boardroom.

#### **4. Our Public Service 2020**

The meeting noted the update on Our Public Service 2020 which was circulated in advance.

It was reported that a proposal in respect of the next phase of public sector reform will be considered by the Public Service Management Board at its next meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September with a view to making a recommendation to the Public Sector Leadership Board. It was noted that the Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath TD, is establishing the Public Service Innovation Advisory Board pursuant to Action 4.1.2 of the Public Service Innovation Strategy, 'Making Innovation Real'. The LGMA has been requested to participate in this Board to represent the local government sector.

#### **5. Decisions for Approval**

##### **5.1 Approval for LGMA Budget 2022**

The LGMA Budget 2022 was recommended by the Board for approval to the Council of the Board at its meeting in November 2021 following the overview provided by the Chair of the Finance Committee as detailed under agenda item 6.2.

##### **5.2 Approval for General Charge Apportionment 2022**

The General Charge Apportionment 2022 was recommended by the Board for approval to the Council of the Board at its meeting in November 2021.

##### **5.3 Approval for the Contingency costs for Refurbishment of Phoenix House**

The Board approved final and contingency costs in respect of the Refurbishment of Phoenix House.

##### **5.4 Approval to go to Tender for Financial Advisory Services for WSTO**

The Board noted that inter Board meeting approval had been received to go to tender for financial advisory services for WSTO.

##### **5.5 Approval for Public Library Sector Charges 2022**

The Board approved the Public Library Sector Charges in respect of 2022 noting the 25% increase on the 2022 costs due to the front loading of costs for the new LMS and the requirement to maintain the present supplier for the period of implementation.

#### 5.6 Approval for Housing Delivery Co-ordination Office Charges 2022

The Board approved the HDCO charges in respect of 2022. The Board noted the funding provided from DHLGH in respect of the HDCO charges 2022.

#### 5.7 Approval for the Annual Finance & Business Charges for 2022

The Board approved the annual Finance and Business charges in respect of 2022.

#### 5.8 Approval for MPI Charges for 2022

The Board approved the MPI charges in respect of 2022.

#### 5.9 Approval for iHouse System Charges 2022

The Board approved the iHouse System charges in respect of 2022.

#### 5.10 Approval for Apportionment Charges for localgov.ie portal 2022

The Board approved the apportionment Charges for localgov.ie portal in respect of 2022. It was noted that this is a new charge for local authorities.

#### 5.11 Approval for ePlanning Charges 2022

The Board approved the ePlanning charges in respect of 2022.

It was noted that the Road Management Office charges 2022 would be presented for approval at the Board meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November. It was agreed that local authorities would be advised of this upcoming charge.

## 6. Governance

### 6.1 Health and Safety

There was no update on health and safety.

### 6.2 Update from Chairs of Sub Committees

#### Finance Committee 14/09/21

Mr McGrath reported that within the LGMA Budget 2022 a 2% increase in local authority contributions is proposed due to cost increases which were noted as unavoidable expenditure comprising three areas; Expected retirement of staff in 2022, i.e., an increase of €94,033 on the 2021 budget; Pay increases, i.e., an increase of €79,193 on the 2021 budget and an additional operational budget cost of €49,265 in 2022 to cover an Agresso MS4 upgrade and ICT Licences.

The Finance Committee approved the LGMA Budget 2022 and LGMA Apportionment of Charges 2022. The Finance Committee agreed to recommend the Budget and the Apportionment of Charges to the Board of the LGMA and the Council of the Board for approval.

#### Audit and Risk Committee 18/05/21

The Audit and Risk Committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021. There was nothing further to add to the update provided to the Board at the previous meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May.

#### PSROG 09/09/21

Mr Keegan reported that PSROG endorsed the Localgov.ie Portal – Peer Review Report and recommendation and noted the revised Business Case for circulation. There has been delays in the commencement of the LA Dangerous Substances Licensing due to funding issues, discussions are underway to resolve this funding issue.

## ICT 14/07/2021

The ICT Committee met on 14/7/21. There was nothing further to add to the update provided to the Board at the previous meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July.

### Change Management Committee: 22/09/2021

Mr Enright provided an update on the Senior Executive Officer – Confined Competition in respect of proposals from the unions on an approach combining confined, sector and open competition. Direct engagement with Directors of Service in respect of the Sectoral Blended Working Discussion Paper - Policy Framework has commenced. New qualifications were considered and agreed in respect of the professionalisation of ICT. The proposed draft Well Being Strategy has been agreed.

## 7. Risk Management

Ms Kelly reported that the revised risk register incorporates twelve risks with no amendment to the risk ratings since the previous meeting of the Board. Three of the high risks are IT related. These risks are Covid 19 Pandemic – Technology, Cyber-attack risk and possible outcomes and legacy systems and old technology. The revised risk register will be considered at the Audit and Risk Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Ongoing monitoring of the risk register will continue. The Board approved the revised risk register.

It was noted that attempts to recruit WSTO Administrative and Support resources at Grade 4/5 on secondment have been unsuccessful over the last two years. Funding has been agreed with DHLGH for a Grade 7 to be advertised as a temporary position, the provision of funding for this position was welcomed by the Board.

## 8. Any Other Business

A report was provided on discussions at the CCMA in respect of the Food Safety Authority Ireland. It was agreed that Mr. Dunne and Ms. Hurley would liaise with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to progress the matter.

## 9. Date, Time, and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2021 at 11am via Teams.

Signed: Chairman



Date:

25/11/2021

