



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle Chathair
Dhoire & Cheantar
an tSraitha Báin

Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Destrack Council

One Strong Sector, One Clear Voice Protecting, promoting, developing councils in Northern Ireland: NILGA Investment & Work Plan 2019/20



NILGA & DoJ Justice Event



Elected Member Development

INVESTMENT & WORK PLAN, THE 4TH PHASE OF NILGA'S CORPORATE PLAN 2016 – 2019 AS AGREED BY THE 11 MEMBER COUNCILS

INTRODUCTION

2019/20 will be a period of massive uncertainty in constitutional, legislative, electoral, policy and performance terms, for the local government sector in Northern Ireland. Opportunities and threats will emerge in terms of council services, civic responsibilities, and our ability to forward plan for the community we serve.

Such challenges come at a time when the ever more complex roles of local councils come under greater scrutiny and pressure like never before.

NILGA's portfolio, representative and delivery work with and for the 11 member councils will respond to and meet those challenges head on. The Work Plan for the collective councils / SOLACE regionally and specifically for your council's elected members and corporate team has been co-designed by councils to fulfil your specific requirements as well as collectively speak up strongly, clearly and as one voice to protect and sustain local government in Northern Ireland.

It supports a **substantial forward planning programme** to ensure councils are skilled, sustainable and resilient now and beyond the next elections which are scheduled for May this year. Delivery will focus on regionally and sub regionally co-ordinated programmes which **develop, promote and protect** councils in equal measure.

The Work Plan includes the delivery of robust, evidence-based representation on matters like devolution within Northern Ireland, and drawing in new investment for every council, offered to those at home and abroad who can politically, legislatively and fiscally improve the sustainability of local government throughout Northern Ireland. It prioritises elected member development, new models of investment and best practice, the sharing of very practical ideas and projects which deliver locality based planning, economic development, civic leadership, regulatory and compliance work, all of which materially assists your Corporate Plan and key support strategies.



PROTECT: Legislation, Powers, Investment & Transfers of Functions:

NILGA in 2019/20 will commission independent work on the Review of Public Administration (RPA) to date and a Devolution Framework for Northern Ireland. These pieces of work will materially involve engagement and consultation with councils.

NILGA will ensure that the NI Executive receives clear local government policy and delivery messages to protect and properly resource councils, utilising the New Burdens Framework designed by NILGA to ensure councils are funded and indemnified for any transfer of responsibility, power or service from regional / national government.

NILGA will reconstitute the **Central – Local Government Political Forum**, until the restoration of the Legislative Assembly, so that matters of common policy and budgetary concern are considered by MLAs and councillors to ensure local, democratic scrutiny on matters such as Emergency Planning, Waste Management, Audit and Performance.

NILGA will formally engage with the **Northern Ireland Affairs Committee** and the **Irish Regional Assemblies** to develop new investment and policy work, advocating in so doing the vital roles of NI councils whilst bringing practical learning and policy information to our 11 council chambers, for example on Growth / City Deals and Spatial Development.

NILGA will advocate the development of an overarching **Rates Review** and an **Entrepreneurial Strategy** for Northern Ireland – as part of a substantial review of existing policies which, supported by central government and delivered by local councils, would create greater, sustainable high streets, small business and community wealth throughout all parts of NI.

NILGA will deliver key evidence to Government Departments, the NI Executive & Assembly when restored, the Northern Ireland Office, political parties and key institutions regionally, nationally and trans-nationally, on ALL important policy / investment matters for the 11 councils in NI. This work will follow consultation with the 11 councils on matters such as Devolution to and within NI, the NI Budget 2019 – 2021, the draft Programme for Government, Domestic & Non Domestic Rates Reform, Brexit, and will include presenting amendments to the Local Government Act NI (2014) in regard to the Councillor Code of Conduct and to fully resource and indemnify councils for all transfers of functions including Regeneration.

PROMOTE: Regional Communication, News Bulletins, a New Media and Web Platform, Member & Officer liaison:

NILGA in 2019/20 will develop a **Councillor's Guide to 2019 – 2023**, offered to the 462 elected members and council member services teams after 2nd May 2019, linked to the important induction and practical learning required to materially assist the complex and demanding role of being a councillor, whatever their level of experience.

Promoting councils, NILGA will continue to deliver a “**Your Local Council: Delivering for All**” – regular media / community showcase initiative, offering ratepayers, media and council partners an opportunity to understand and celebrate the pivotal and diverse roles councils play in the economy, community and environment.

NILGA will produce 10 NILGA Regional Bulletins, related Press Releases, provide presentations to councils, party group leaders and SOLACE as required, attend Party Conferences, represent council's best interests in national and regional media and ensure excellent local community coverage of the Ulster in Bloom Programme throughout 2019/20.



PROTECT: Statutory Representation and Co-ordination

NILGA in 2019/20 will work **practically** with the 11 councils at elected member and officer level to ensure that the major needs of local councils are brought to bear on all bodies investing in and legislating for our future, whether these are within or outside of NI. NILGA supports the restoration of the NI Assembly to its full legislative capacity but will diligently seek the strengthening of local government powers and resources whether restored or not.

This work will include representation on the National Joint Council, the UK Local Government Forum, the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee; Programme for Government and Brexit Steering & Advisory Groups; Growth & Jobs, Rural Development, Peace & Reconciliation and Interreg Monitoring Committees; Strategic Planning & Waste Management bodies, Industrial Strategy roll out and review bodies; the Commonwealth Local Government Group, the Association of Irish Local Government, the UK Local Government Forum, the All Island Civic Forum and the Department for Exiting the European Union.

Despite the present impasse at the Assembly, NILGA will provide a full support service and lobbying role with and for the 11 councils to ensure an effective, productive Central – Local Political Forum for Local Government, reconstituting this to suit prevailing needs, in tandem with councils, SOLACE, the Department for Communities, Permanent Secretaries and NIO.

Having gained agreement during 2018/19, the Association will co-ordinate NI local government's input in to the Employer's side of the National Joint Council (NJC) to determine roll out of the **National Pay Spine Review, National Living Wage** and **National Pay** and will also provide regular briefings and consultations.

DEVELOP: Regional and Sub Regional Awareness and Network Events, Flagship Annual Conference:

NILGA in 2019/20 will co-ordinate 18 learning and networking events on Leadership, Planning, Community Planning, Devolution, the Circular Economy, the NI Budget 2019 – 2021, Brexit, Strategic Migration, Government & Departmental Key Strategies including the Waste Management Strategy, new Regional & Local Rates proposals, applying the General Power of Competence, induction on existing and revised parts of the Code of Conduct, the New Burdens Framework, and more.

These bespoke events will be free to the 11 member councils.

NILGA will co-ordinate four Strategic Member & Officer Partnership events throughout the year, hosted across our council areas, on key matters including Infrastructure and the Local economy, High Street regeneration, Broadband, Rural Development, and Community Empowerment.

These strategic partnership events will be free to the 11 member councils.

NILGA will work in partnership with SOLACE and APSE to deliver our **Annual Flagship Conference and Council Awards Event**, which will take place in February 2020. Prior to this, in October 2019, it will take forward the “**Planning Excellence in Local Government**” Summit, which will look at progress, learning, achievements and needs of the councils regarding making planning work for all.



DEVELOP: 21st Century Councils - The Regional Programme for Elected Member Development, Charter / Charter Plus:

Now a nationally recognised member development learning provider, NILGA in 2019/20 will lead the **Charter, Charter Plus and Charter Renewal** Programmes for all 11 councils, building on the successful regional programme of elected member development co-designed with councils, both members and officers.

In partnership with councils and the Local Government Training Group (LGTG), together with the National Association of Councillors (NAC) and delivery partners, NILGA will formally roll out in 2019/20 the inaugural **Regional Programme for Elected Member Development for NI councils**, which will include accredited learning tools on planning and place shaping leadership.

NILGA will also establish with the 11 councils, LGTG and SOLACE an **Elected Members Induction Programme**, in advance of and beyond the May 2019 elections, to ensure local

council level delivery of a core, consistent, contemporary Councillors' Guide for all 462 returned members.

NILGA will retain the procurement benefits for NI councils of membership of the **National Association of Regional Employers'** (NARE) and input councils' requirements to NARE on workforce, member development and related employment law issues.

PROTECT: National and Regional Policy, Lobbying, Guidance & Publications:

NILGA in 2019/20 will provide essential policy guidance working with the 11 councils, submitting consultative work to all NI Executive Departments, Westminster, Whitehall and all island bodies to **protect, advocate and sustain** local councils in Northern Ireland.

NILGA will consolidate and develop its all council strategic, regional working groups (SRWGs, see below also) to draw together cross council knowledge and share this right across the sector as well as to emphasise good governance and communication.

The Association will co-ordinate NI local government's input in to the Employer's side of the National Joint Council (NJC) to determine agreements on the **National Pay Spine Review, National Living Wage** and **National Pay** and will also provide regular briefings and consultations.

NILGA will participate fully in other strategic work at national level including within the UK & Ireland wide Local Government Group.

NILGA will draw down additional investment and collate best practice for NI councils on matters including elected member development, entrepreneurship and economic development, broadband, community planning, infrastructure and coastal erosion.

NILGA will continue the "Making Planning Work" **series**, produce contemporary, user friendly **Planning Guidance**, and ensure that revisions to the **Councillor Code of Conduct** are (i) fully understood within all councils, (ii) fully tested through scenario training & awareness events and (iii) do not disadvantage councils or councillors in NI comparative to neighbouring jurisdictions.

NILGA will continue to support the policy, partnership and legislative work of the **NI Strategic Migration Partnership** (NISMP) and will draw on its expertise to further Community planning & resilience work and lobby for a regional migration strategy.



PROMOTE:
International & European Policy, Investment & Representation:

NILGA will collaborate with other LGAs to lobby DEXEU and other relevant government departments to ensure that councils are materially resourced for Brexit planning and impacts and to ensure that councils are ready to take advantage of opportunities arising.

NILGA will lobby for an appropriate consultation mechanism for NI councils at pre-legislative stage for all matters which are repatriated under the **EU Withdrawal Bill**.

NILGA will coordinate a **strategic group of senior strategic development officers** and will cultivate relationships with key partners, representative bodies, government departments and statutory bodies to influence future legislation, strategy and funding frameworks.

From the above, NILGA will ensure that members are briefed through the **Economy, Investment & Rural Development Working Group** on matters such as Brexit, broadband and investment opportunities for councils and that regionally coordinated responses on matters of interest to councils are agreed, with member councils all represented.

NILGA in 2019/20 will develop, with councils and Invest NI, a 52 nation **Commonwealth Local Government Forum 2019 Investment Summit, bringing buyers, investors and economic development into council areas**.

Transnationally, NILGA will work with the 11 councils to bring local and sub regional (cross council) investment opportunities stemming from the EU Committee of the Regions, in particular through our participation in the **iEER Boost** (entrepreneurship) project with 9 other regions. NILGA's participation in this project is valued at £200,000 and 5 councils have participated to date. We will continue to collaborate with entrepreneurship stakeholders to share learning and best practice gathered in the project and to influence policy change in Northern Ireland.

NILGA will provide advice and guidance to members of the EU's Committee of the Regions and all relevant EU Monitoring Committees (e.g. Peace IV, Rural Development, Growth & Jobs and Interreg), and related bodies.

DEVELOP:
Strategic, Regional Working Groups (SRWGs):

NILGA in 2019/20 will enable a minimum of 12 task and finish sessions for all councils of NILGA SRWGs on Planning, Community Planning, The Local Economy / Brexit, Member Development and Audit, Risk & Sustainability. These will be convened in partnership with councils, SOLACE and government departments, including Department of Finance, Department for the Economy, Department for Communities, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Each Group has a specific work plan tailored exclusively to councils' requirements and will reflect the emerging Programme for Government, devolution, growth / city deal, performance management and shared services agendas.

PROTECT: NI Councils' future sustainability - research and development:

NILGA in 2019/20 will commission independent work on the **Review of Public Administration (RPA) to date** and a **Devolution Framework for Northern Ireland**. These pieces of work will materially involve engagement and consultation with councils.

NILGA in 2019/20 will ensure that regionally co-ordinated work on future proofing local government in Northern Ireland, led by councils and delivered by NILGA in partnership with bodies such as SOLACE and APSE, will benefit councils. In 2019/20, R&D work will cover Devolution, Community Wealth and Civic Engagement, Brexit, the Circular Economy, Waste Management, Winter Maintenance Protocols, developing a Programme for Local Government, Strengthening Participative Local Democracy, Place Shaping, Commissioning and Performance Management, and other work **as required by councils**.



PROMOTE: Good corporate planning & performance management:

NILGA Executive minutes will be provided to all councils and NILGA members will work to a clear communication protocol, for the benefit of each council.

During 2019/20, NILGA will reframe its constitution, Annual General Meeting, financial, recruitment and other required policies, communications and structures in strict adherence to all relevant good governance, audit and procurement standards. The NILGA Office Bearers, Executive, Working Groups, staff and other representative groups apply these standards fully and **an Audit, Risk and Sustainability team** will meet 3 - 4 times proposing KPI and Balanced Scorecard reviews to the 11 council Executive of member councils. Key performance standards are in place organisationally and for all staff members, through the annual Performance Review and Development process. This is overseen by member councils with expert advice drawn from outside bodies and councils as required. NILGA will report Results v Targets in its Annual Report in June 2019 and will fully consult during 2019 on a new Corporate Plan for the period June 2019 - May 2023.

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Derry City and Strabane District Council

Derry City & Strabane District Council's subscription for the above Investment & Work Plan in 2019/20 is £48,914 (excluding VAT), representing a 0% increase on 2018/19.

Derry City & Strabane District Council along with Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, Ards & North Down, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down is a Band B Council, which is a Council with a population between 145,000 – 300,000. An invoice will be sent to your Council on 1st April 2019 for payment by 30th June 2019.

Costs for the all council, national level subscription to the Employers Side of the NJC (c. £4,150 per council) is billed separately, an amount which will be forwarded in full to the LGA (England).

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