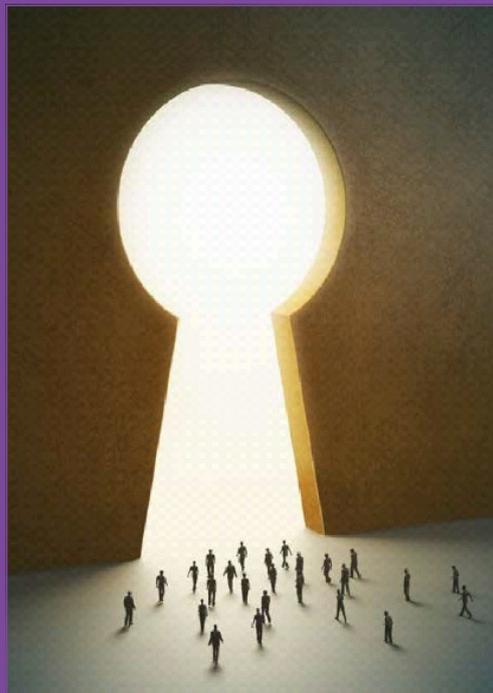




**Northern Ireland**

**Local Government Association -**

**the voice of local government, championing councils in NI.**



**ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN - 2013 / 2014**

***NILGA speaks up for local government and offers modern, effective and accountable representation and services. We are led by, and accountable to, the 26 district councils.***

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*NILGA's Corporate Plan, approved in 2012 by its Full Membership, for the period September 2012—March 2016, underpins this Annual Business Plan.*



*NILGA- the voice of local government,  
championing councils in NI.*

## 2013/14 Business Plan – Key Themes / Actions

1.	<b>STRENGTHENING COUNCILS &amp; LOCAL DEMOCRACY</b> Ensuring Councils are at the forefront of local decision making; providing an increasingly significant contribution to the Programme for Government, as well as national and trans-national issues which matter to us.  What we will do in 2013/14:	
1.1	<b>Maintain a strong voice for local government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present evidence and lobby government departments, putting forward a case for the sector on any critical issue affecting NI's Councils.</li> <li>• Present policy development proposals that will deliver increased focus on Councils' agreed priorities, such as more local input into and delivery of the Programme for Government 2012-2020.</li> <li>• Present evidence, lobby for and engage actively across the sector to resource and design clear, sector led, capacity building and development programmes for councillors, for LG Reform and more holistically.</li> <li>• Engage actively with central government departments and other external partners to ensure local government's voice and experience are part of the policy design, planning and service delivery stages for strategic work &amp; functions which Councils perform or may be required to do.</li> <li>• Communicate/participate fully &amp; strongly on the Programme for Government, Review of the NI Assembly, Waste, Planning, Economic and Investment Strategies and Urban/Rural Policies, as an arm of government, whilst retaining the sector's independence.</li> <li>• <b>Refresh and restate the Vision for Local Government.</b></li> </ul>
1.2	<b>Influence and Negotiate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work jointly with Councils and clusters of councils, supporting them to develop sector wide policy positions e.g. Re-organisation, economy, waste, planning, community, urban and rural development.</li> <li>• Represent Councils regionally, nationally and in Europe on all policy areas including negotiating on EU Fines, Structural Funds, Strategic Migration, employment and workforce development issues.</li> <li>• Lobby for Councils to have greater local decision making through materially influencing the development of regional, national and European policy, including the Charter for Local Self Government.</li> <li>• Ensure that NILGA's working groups adhere to an efficient, effective annual delivery plan, informed by and informing the sector on critical issues affecting Councils.</li> <li>• Lobby for Councils to have greater power and influence on how localities and economies are developed e.g. through the PfG, Area Plans, Planning and Local Government reform legislation, as well as the transfer of required functions.</li> <li>• <i>Work with the LGA (England) and the Department of the Environment (DoE NI) from April 2013 in order to fully account for / optimise investment here in Northern Ireland during a period of change within prescribed groups, including the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) and Local Government Regulatory Bodies (LACORS, as part of LGA), for NI councils, through NILGA, within its agreed Corporate Plan, until the new councils are formed on or after April 2015.</i></li> </ul>
1.3	<b>Promote and support councillors and their development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh and restate the Vision for Local Government.</li> <li>• Identify and ensure delivery, in partnership, of training required for elected members, ensuring they have the skills and capacity to fulfil their roles and responsibilities (identifying and applying investment as required).</li> <li>• Provide elected members with the necessary communication tools to ensure they are adequately briefed on policy and other key issues to facilitate their decision making processes.</li> </ul>
1.4	<b>Promote the sector in the Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver an effective media strategy to ensure the sector presents a constructive, positive and forceful case and reputation.</li> <li>• Anticipate and respond to high profile issues in the media which are relevant to the Association and the Local Government sector.</li> <li>• Develop improved communications through social media, sector bulletins, 12 + engagement events and Annual Conference, for and with Councils</li> <li>• Implement NILGA's agreed Communication and Engagement Strategy to ensure effective two way communication between NILGA and its partners.</li> </ul>

<b>2. BUILDING THE ROLE and REPUTATION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR</b>		
Ensuring the Association and its membership are seen as strong, responsive and customer focused.		
What we will do 2013/14:		
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Build and maintain a sustainable, needs driven Association with a corporately aligned work plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the 2012—2016 Corporate Plan.</li> <li>• Consult with Councils, identifying their needs and expectations as required from the Association and implement agreed Corporate, Investment and Staff Development Plans internally.</li> <li>• Further review NILGA's Constitution to further enhance the needs of Councils; promote balance of party/council representation; and maximise engagement of all Councils, councillors and political parties.</li> <li>• NILGA Working Groups working to an efficient, effective annual delivery plan, informed by and informing the sector on critical issues affecting Councils.</li> <li>• Develop improved communications through social media, sector bulletins, 12 + engagement events and Annual Conference, for and with Councils.</li> <li>• Develop improved contractual, resource pooling and investment arrangements with other LGAs in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland to maximise the value of these Associations for Councils in NI.</li> </ul>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Build Strong Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop strong relationships to empower Local Government with political parties, SOLACE, LGSC, NAC, LGAs, DoE, NICS Departments, NI Assembly, private and community sectors.</li> <li>• Bring LGA and related expertise into NI from England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.</li> <li>• Identify key issues for local government, agree roles and responsibilities and develop necessary protocols to ensure effective working partnerships are developed and maintained</li> <li>• Promote Local Government through motivational events such as NILGA's Annual Conference, Ulster in Bloom, Engagement Events and the Local Government Awards initiative.</li> <li>• Develop procurement and entrepreneurial region campaigns with councils and relevant partners, such as MEPs and the Federation of Small Businesses.</li> <li>• Actively monitor all partnership arrangements to minimise dissatisfaction and identify growth opportunities of relevance to Councils.</li> </ul>

<b>3. SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF STRONG AND EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>		
Delivering on the reform of local government		
What we will do 2013/14:		
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Drive the Implementation of Local Government Reform in the very best interests of councils and communities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement reform with the sector's needs at the fore, with NILGA's Executive, Working Groups and Councils, DoE, SOLACE and the NI Assembly.</li> <li>• Ensure that all Reform legislative, financial, human resource, and timetable related barriers to progress are communicated on thoroughly and effectively.</li> <li>• Be an effective, valuable and relevant part of the Programme for Government, with Councils.</li> <li>• Secure appropriate policy, delivery models and funding for the reform of local government, the transfer of functions, community planning and the power of general competence.</li> <li>• Engage with Councils on identification / communication of issues and the minimisation of associated risks – such as increased costs and resource planning issues.</li> <li>• Facilitate discussion and sharing of good practice, including the creation of a structured library of local government reform documentation on the NILGA website and the establishment of a social media infrastructure, while bringing benchmarking from other areas to enhance Reform.</li> <li>• Deliver a communication and co-ordination plan and administrative support for Local Government reform, with DoE and Councils.</li> <li>• Engage proactively with the Assembly, Departments and MLAs, as well as communities, business and media, to advance practical, sustainable, effective, innovative, results driven reforms which benefit Councils and communities.</li> </ul>

<b>4. SUPPORTING COUNCILS TO ACHIEVE GREATER EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	
Supporting the development and implementation of the ICE Programme	
What we will do 2013/14:	
<b>4.1 Provide political leadership, coordination &amp; communication for the ICE Programme &amp; other initiatives which will assist to sustain and develop NI's councils.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure elected members have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to undertake the roles and responsibilities sought by and required of them.</li> <li>• Provide secretariat, co-ordination, political analysis and communication support for the ICE Programme</li> <li>• Encourage and facilitate sharing of good practice across the sector including products/initiatives brought from other jurisdictions</li> <li>• Ensure that the ICE Programme's links with LG Reform are properly communicated, and that its distinctiveness is maintained</li> </ul>

<b>5. DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE TO COUNCILS</b>	
Ensuring NILGA delivers a customer focused, value for money service by improved focus on council and councillor needs	
What we will do 2013/14:	
<b>5.1 Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and simplify governance arrangements for the Association through new constitutional and corporate accounting arrangements.</li> <li>• Actively monitor council, party and councillor engagement levels and customer satisfaction to identify areas of benefit, achieve positive participation and minimise areas of dissatisfaction by taking corrective action.</li> <li>• Review funding arrangements as part of enhancing NILGA's value for money and sustainability requirements.</li> <li>• Deliver annual Business Plans, as part of the Corporate Plan 2012—2016, reporting progress against targets as appropriate to Office Bearers, Executive, Full Members and Councils.</li> </ul>
<b>5.2 Organisational Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver NILGA's Corporate Plan for the period September 2012—March 2016.</li> <li>• Continue to implement Staff Development Plans in 2013/14.</li> <li>• Ensure that NILGA's working groups adhere to an efficient, effective, annual delivery plan, informed by and informing the sector on critical issues affecting Councils.</li> <li>• Identify financial resources required and appropriate funding streams, reporting annually through AGM, Annual Report, Business Plan and Full Council / Standing Committee presentations upon request.</li> <li>• Provision of necessary staff, secondments and attachments to ensure the skills, knowledge and experience exist to deliver the Corporate Plan and engage in wider investment and product development to sustain the Association's services for Councils.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate fiscal and related (resource planning, reporting processes and systems) are in place to deliver services in an efficient, effective manner, driven by innovation, good governance and value for money.</li> </ul>

INCOME	ESTIMATE 2013/14
NILGA - council subscriptions	435,942
EU - DFP	69,287
EU - LGA	30,000
NISMP	102,798
NIJC/JNC	122,615
ULSTER IN BLOOM	4,500
DOE Funding	20,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>785,142</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
NILGA Core Staffing	345,234
Project Salaries Total	192,563
<b>Total Salaries</b>	<b>537,797</b>
Conference, Overheads, Working Groups, non project work	182,838
Project Expenditure (excluding salaries)	64,507
Total Expenditure	<b>247,345</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>785,142</b>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>0</b>

NILGA 's Core Working Groups will continue to operate within a specific work plan, as outlined below, but will also develop understanding by councillors and council representatives of cross cutting matters such as demographic changes, economic impact of strategic migration (www.nismp.org) and other key issues which help shape the councils of tomorrow—thereby contributing to “future proofing” local authorities and keeping the Vision real and contemporary.						
Group Name	Modernisation Communication and Reform (MCRWG)	Planning (PWG)	Inter-regional/EU Policy and Practice (IEPP)	Waste and Environment (WE)	Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD)	NILGA / NAC and Local Government Training Group
<b>Key objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restating the Vision for Local Government</li> <li>Political Support / Development of Local Government Reform and Improvement</li> <li>Development of the NILGA elected member role in key policy discussions</li> <li>Engagement Activity at local council and Departmental levels</li> <li>Be A Councillor Campaign</li> <li><b>Democratic Scrutiny</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful transfer of a fit for purpose Planning Service</li> <li>Awareness Raising and Engagement in Planning reform</li> <li>Campaigning for the design and delivery of a suitable suite of planning policies</li> <li>Campaigning for the design and delivery of new strategic development and community planning systems and policies</li> <li>Development of the NILGA elected member role in key policy discussions</li> <li><b>Democratic Scrutiny</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting sustainable economic growth and development opportunities such as Procurement and Entrepreneurial Region campaigns in 2013 &amp; 2014</li> <li>Provision of an ‘early warning’ system on the impact of EU policies and proposals</li> <li>NI local government representation in Europe</li> <li>EU Structural Funds re-design to benefit Councils &amp; Communities</li> <li><b>Democratic Scrutiny</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LG delivery of the NI Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation of the NI Waste Strategy with results against targets</li> <li>Development of policy on community planning and the power of general competence</li> <li>Relevant legislation, guidance, policy and practice on Waste, Health and Environment</li> <li><b>Democratic Scrutiny</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of a Local Government section for the rural white paper action plan</li> <li>CAP reform</li> <li>Political advocacy relating to the Welfare of Animals Act and other critical policies as they apply to Councils and rural communities</li> <li>Implementation of the NI Rural Development Programme, and exploration of new opportunities</li> <li>Initiatives to support methods to reduce agricultural and rural crime</li> <li><b>Democratic Scrutiny</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member development and capacity building (in partnership)</li> <li>Communication - review of NIJC/JNC</li> <li>Workforce Strategy - supporting HR Structures (I.C.E., LGSC, LGTG)</li> <li>Elected member leadership and engagement</li> <li>Be a Councillor Campaign</li> <li><b>Democratic Scrutiny</b></li> </ul>
<b>Wider objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist in designing and developing a capacity building framework and programme for the sector as part of the Vision for local government</li> <li>To ensure that local government is engaged in initiatives which positively transform the sector and contribute to a real and contemporary Vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting in the specification and delivery of the wider capacity building framework for Planning</li> <li>Assisting in the wider work on the new elected member role and code of conduct</li> <li>Lobbying on planning issues and a partnership role for Local Government within an integrated, all - Government approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building member capacity on EU issues</li> <li>Disseminating knowledge and a menu of investment throughout the sector</li> <li>Supporting elected members and officers to influence policy, plan and deliver investment through spatial planning and lobbying/influence</li> <li>Supporting elected European bodies in conjunction with other LGAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful lobbying activity on relevant issues</li> <li>Democratic Scrutiny of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste, health and environment communications activity, across government</li> <li>Climate Change / Energy / Carbon Reduction activity in Councils</li> <li>Health Pilots/ Health Promotion/ Preventative Healthcare activity in partnership with Councils</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural planning and renewable energy issues (with PWG)</li> <li>Agricultural and Fishing issues as they impact on Councils (e.g. Farm Competitive Fund)</li> <li>Future of rural settlements, rural community cohesion and rural infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linkage with / support for / co-ordination of contemporary and necessary elected member development initiatives</li> <li>Investment in future planning for work force</li> </ul>



## **Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)**

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