

Strong Councils, Great Local Government - *supported by NILGA*



A 2016 Summary Guide to the New Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) working for our 11 New Councils.

Who are we?

The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) is the council led representative body for the new local authorities in NI.

What do we do?

NILGA promotes, develops and champions local government by developing regional (all council) approaches to key issues affecting the sector, including policy work, elected member development, collective lobbying, consultation advice, providing evidence, putting a case for local government, identifying new investment for councils, running best practice events and campaigns - all designed to **improve both democracy and public services** for local people.

How do we do it?

NILGA members are drawn from each of the 11 councils. The Association supports and represents NI Local Government's interests on regional bodies such as the Partnership Panel with the NI Assembly, within the Local Government Group of Associations in the UK (with over 440 councils as members) and in Europe - **NILGA won the European Entrepreneurial Region Award for NI in 2015** as conferred by the EU's Committee of the Regions and has **secured for NI the circa 900 delegate Local Government Commonwealth Conference with 25 countries in 2019**.

Who do we work with?

Apart from 11 Member Councils, Ministers, Government Departments, NILGA is supported by political parties and independent members in councils, and works in partnership with other key regional players such as SOLACE (Chief Executive's Body), the NAC, Colleges NI, our Universities and the NI Housing Council. NILGA's work is facilitated by a small but dynamic officer team, supporting elected members in their actions, providing advice and direction to take decisions on issues as important as Waste, Planning, local economies and member learning.

Why do we do it?

We do it to ensure a collective voice for and with councils. We communicate the importance of local government as a growing, sustainable and modern part of government in NI. We do it to ensure that the sector is a partner of equal, equipped with an informed, strong, unified voice when working with the NI Executive, national governments, the EU, other legislative bodies and major industrial, financial, community and political partners.

**If you have any enquiry regarding NILGA's work or membership,
please contact the Association's Chief Executive,
Derek McCallan - d.mccallan@nilga.org**

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KEY SUCCESSES

Investment - Maintained the circa £17 million Rates Support Grant for Councils. Successful campaign for investment in local government reform, resulting in a £47 million package. Safeguarding investment in the transfer of Regeneration powers to councils. Savings of over £30k for members attending NILGA endorsed events/workshops.

EER - Northern Ireland selected as European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) 2015. The award follows an application by NILGA, supported by Invest NI.

Partnership Panel - Supporting the ongoing development of the Panel. NILGA, along with the DoE, is joint secretariat.

Public Sector Exit Payments - Lobbied central government regarding exit payments cap, how it would impact on long serving, lower paid members of the local government pension scheme and would have been contrary to the Public Service Commission's guiding principles. Following consideration by the NI Assembly, the motion wasn't approved and the cap will therefore not extend to NI.

Training - Securing investment and building new capacity for elected members through programmes such as 'Charter Mark' for councils, members and officers.

2016 - 2020 Programme for Government - Councils part of the co-design and implementation, for the first time, due to NILGA's campaigning.

Local Government Act - Strengthened through forensic analysis and presentation of solutions with ongoing communication of changes, e.g. General Power of Competence and Code of Conduct. NILGA recognised by the Environment Committee and other Departments as the "go to" organisation for the sector.

Ulster in Bloom - With the ongoing commitment of councils, the competition continues to support the enhancement of communities across our villages, towns and city's. In addition, through Britain in Bloom, we have shown our region is up there with the best of the best across the UK.

NISMP - Published community profiles for each of the 11 councils in response to council concerns on the lack of migration data. Worked with partners and stakeholders to improve the implementation of policy which will result in more effective services for vulnerable migrant communities and more efficient use of public resources.

Councillors' Code of Conduct Update - Minister has agreed to review the Code. NILGA campaigning for a robust but swift review, should not be derailed by legislative and procedural impasses, nor held up by elections. NILGA continues to engage with the Ombudsman's office in relation to future training requirements.

If you have any enquiry regarding NILGA's work or membership, please contact the Association's Chief Executive, Derek McCallan - d.mccallan@nilga.org

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NILGA - the voice of local government

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