

### NILGA MEMBER POLICY AND LEARNING NETWORKS

#### 1. Adding Value to Councils and Corporate Relevance for the Sector

The actions related to the three themes and associated 20 actions making up NILGA's 2019 – 2023 Corporate Plan will be practically supported by a small, focused number of Member Policy and Learning Networks which strategically align to, inform and are drawn from councils, plus NILGA's Full Membership and Executive Committee.

This ensures a dynamic, inter-dependent and integrated policy development and communication system for local government.

To ensure that NILGA fulfils its role in supporting the development of a strong, effective sector, it is vital for this to be fully understood, embraced and owned by our member councils – both elected members and officers.

As such, NILGA will seek for meetings of these Groups to be hosted by councils, to be fully aligned to the corporate governance of our member local authorities, and to be fully communicated at Standing Committees.

The impact of these groups within councils and externally, particularly of the lead elected members, is critically important to improving regional communications and policy effectiveness.

The system of Elected Member Policy and Learning Networks has been further refined for 2019 – 2023, driven by the developing need for the 11 post-reform councils and the issues affecting the sector in this mandate.

This includes a fresh impetus & focus on devolution, on reviewing local government reform, on **powers, resources and protection** of councils; emerging as a leader body in terms of elected member development, and policy and resource lobbying to support and progress community planning. Similarly, effective services and appropriate performance measurement & management, underpinned by sustainability & efficiency, feature heavily.

These Networks focus on work that needs to be done and learning that needs to be shared, to improve councils in N. Ireland and develop the knowledge & use of new working practices and governance requirements.

Developing policy, supporting improved guidance, addressing communication and investment deficits, and providing training within the Corporate Plan Period 2019 – 2023 will be dynamic actions of the Networks, during a time of unprecedented uncertainty due to Brexit and the regional political impasse.

#### 2. Linking the objectives of the Member Networks to the draft Programme for Government (NI).

Councils have been endeavouring to ensure that community plans and other council led plans and strategies, tie in with the relatively new outcomes-based draft Programme for Government (NI). It is incumbent on NILGA to ensure that the work we do supports council needs and supports members to build their own and the sector's capacity in priority areas. NILGA, through the member network system will support NI local government to work in partnership with NI Government and Westminster; acting locally, relevant regionally and nationally

#### 3. Linking the objectives of the Member Networks to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Councils in Northern Ireland have been at the forefront of sustainable development since the UN launched Agenda 21 in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Now that the three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – have helped frame the wellbeing agenda and form the framework for the council-led community planning system, and as we approach 2021, it is time for NILGA to contemporise its approach. We want to ensure that Northern Ireland's councils are playing their part in meeting the goals identified by the UN in its SD agenda for 2030; acting locally, relevant globally, leading by example. The Networks, in many cases, will distil existing good practice and promote simple, yet effective, new initiatives also.

#### 4. NILGA's five Policy & Learning Networks and Audit Working Group

Network Name	REFORM, DEVOLUTION AND IMPROVEMENT	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
Chair	Party 1	Party 1
Vice Chair	Party 2	Party 2
Members	One from each council	One from each council
Support Officer	Derek McCallan / Council CEOs	Lisa O'Kane / Council officers
Key objectives	<p><b>Lobbying</b> for the necessary (and still outstanding) legislation, guidance and support for councils in relation to local government reform, community planning and well-being.</p> <p><b>Co-ordinating</b> actions around the Local Government Reform / RPI Review, New burdens Doctrine, devolution within Northern Ireland, and NILGA's Programme &amp; Vision for Local Government.</p> <p><b>Materially contributing to</b> the evidence and mechanisms to develop shared services and performance improvement.</p>	<p><b>Democratic Scrutiny of:</b> NI Economic Strategy (and related strategies), national &amp; international funding policies &amp; programmes and Councils input into same.</p> <p>Regional council input into economic, tourism and rural development issues</p> <p>Regional council input into the delivery of local skills, growth and jobs</p> <p><b>Monitoring:</b> Local Government representation in and benefit from Europe and international organisation, and oversight of member representation on relevant outside bodies</p> <p>Brexit as it impacts on councils</p> <p><b>Oversight</b> of opportunities presented by Sister Cities, Commonwealth, North - South /East- West and international partners</p>
Wider objectives	<p>Building member capacity in relation to devolution, new burdens, community planning and performance management and improvement.</p> <p>Design and delivery of regional member development events on relevant issues.</p> <p>Supporting the competency development of elected members in their strategic management and scrutiny roles related to devolution, reform, improvement, performance management, and shared services.</p>	<p>Building member capacity on Economic, EU and international issues.</p> <p>Disseminating knowledge and investment opportunities throughout the Councils. Supporting elected members and officers to influence policy, plan and deliver investment in specific sectors. Communicating role of elected members on key European bodies e.g. CoR, Congress, CEMR, Monitoring Committees and the Managing Authorities in NI.</p> <p>Partnership working with key linked bodies (e.g. Regional Assemblies, Cross Border Bodies, LGAs, sectoral representative bodies) to innovate, and offer best practice solutions.</p>

<b>Network Name</b>	<b>PLACE SHAPING AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	<b>ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>Chair</b>	<b>Party 1</b>	<b>Party 1</b>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Party 2</b>	<b>Party 2</b>
<b>Members</b>	<b>One from each council</b>	<b>One from each council</b>
<b>Support Officer</b>	<b>Karen Smyth / Council Officers</b>	<b>Fiona Douglas / HR, Members Services &amp; Democratic Services Officers</b>
<b>Key objectives</b>	<p><b>Lobbying</b> for the necessary (and still outstanding) legislation, guidance and support for councils in relation to planning and regeneration e.g. Regeneration Bill, SPSS, continued concern re transfer of functions funding. Future proofing NI Infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Democratic Scrutiny</b> of: Departmental and partner organisation input into the design delivery and resourcing of planning, regeneration, roads, water, transport, energy and communications infrastructure, climate change adaptation activity, SuDS, parks and open space provision</p> <p><b>Monitoring</b> the progress of the relationship between DfI and councils on planning and infrastructure e.g. on place-shaping, the Planning Portal, roads closures, roads maintenance and statutory consultee activity.</p> <p>Monitoring the progress of the relationship between councils DfC, NIHE and other housing providers in relation to housing supply and allocation</p>	<p>The Elected Member Development Network has representation from members across councils and is supported by the National Association of Councillors. It ensures that a regionally co-ordinated set of inexpensive, professional, vital member learning and development initiatives have been created by members themselves, based on best practice and local need, tailored to each council in NI. The EMDN is implementing a Work Plan which has Charter – the national standard for Elected Member Development - at its core, with an ambition to achieve – and retain - Charter or Charter Plus for all 11 councils by December 2019. Member Development and Capacity Building at Regional Level (in partnership, including Charter)</p> <p>Partnership Work including Training and Awareness Events with LGTG, NAC, Politics Plus, NI Ombudsman, LGA, European EU regulatory, awareness and funding bodies. Communication around pay/ performance linked to National Negotiating Machinery. Production of and investment in Toolkits of Information such as Councillors Guide 2015 – 2019.</p>
<b>Wider objectives</b>	<p>Building member capacity; design and delivery of regional member development events and Supporting the competency development of elected members on relevant issues.</p> <p>Design and provision of necessary regional member development events. Assisting in the wider work on the new elected member role and code of conduct. Continued development of a partnership role for local government within an integrated govt approach.</p>	<p>Best Practice in terms of Workforce Development and Versatility</p> <p>Different Service Delivery Models – Commissioning, Outsourcing (Councils as Municipal Entrepreneurs). Political Skills Framework for Councillors. Apprenticeships in local government – benchmarks and models to consider.</p>

<b>Network Name</b>	<b>HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING</b>	<b>AUDIT &amp; ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP</b>
<b>Chair</b>	<b>Party 1</b>	<b>Party 1</b>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Party 2</b>	<b>Party 2</b>
<b>Members</b>	One from each council	One from each remaining political party
<b>Support Officer</b>	<b>Karen Smyth / Council Officers</b>	<b>Derek McCallan / Diane Anderson</b>
<b>Key objectives</b>	<p><b>Democratic Scrutiny</b> of: Departmental and partner organisation input in relation to climate change mitigation, community mental and physical wellbeing, leisure provision, community safety, regulatory issues, energy efficiency, fuel poverty and to develop regional policy approaches on these and related issues.</p> <p><b>Monitoring</b> the progress of the relationship between government departments and councils on community, health and environment issues, including relationships with arms-length bodies</p> <p><b>Oversight</b> of the partnership work between local and central government and partners on delivery of a circular economy and waste management in NI.</p>	<p>To update NILGA's risk register quarterly.</p> <p>To ensure that NILGA's activities are sustainable, compliant and accountable.</p> <p>To ensure that an effective system of internal control is maintained.</p> <p>To develop recommendations regarding NILGA's sustainability in the new electoral period 2019 – 2023.</p> <p>Review and approve plans in relation to external audit.</p> <p>Review NILGA's performance as set out in the Corporate Plan and Annual Report.</p> <p>Review key areas of risk in NILGA's activities and maintain Risk Register.</p> <p>Sanction meetings of All Council CE Pay &amp; Performance Body</p>
<b>Wider Objectives</b>	<p>Building member capacity; design and delivery of regional member development events on relevant issues.</p> <p>Supporting the competency development of elected members in their strategic management and scrutiny roles related to climate change mitigation, community mental and physical wellbeing, leisure provision, community safety, regulatory issues, energy efficiency, fuel poverty and related issues.</p> <p>Design and provision of necessary regional member development events. Assisting in the wider work on the new elected member role and code of conduct. Continued development of a partnership role for local government within an integrated govt approach.</p>	Governance of NILGA – reporting to Executive & aligned to Corporate Plan