

Report on	Response to NILGA Report – Devolution in Northern Ireland
Date of Meeting	Thursday 6 September 2018
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	A Tohill, Chief Executive

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) has circulated a report to all councils entitled <i>Devolution within Northern Ireland</i> seeking commentary on its contents, general proposals and direction. The purpose of this paper is to consider a draft response to the report.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>The NILGA report examines information and evidence for an extension of responsibilities of local government in Northern Ireland. The basis of this would be a devolution of further responsibilities from Stormont/the NI Assembly. The report has been compiled in the context of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a drive towards greater power for cities and regions across other parts of the UK • proposed augmentation review as specified in the Local Govt. (NI) Act 2014 • EU withdrawal • Absence at the time of writing of a devolved legislative Assembly in Stormont
2.2	Correspondence from the Chief Executive of NILGA and the Report, as referenced above, are attached as Appendix A to this paper.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The NILGA Report at appendix A is set out under a series of sections and provides a review and analysis of the areas of public spending in Northern Ireland. It also considers the case/arguments for a greater devolution of responsibilities to councils. Local councils accounted for under 4% of public spending throughout the 2015-16 period, compared with 27% in Scotland and Wales.
3.2	<p>The high level basic arguments presented within the report for greater devolution to councils include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services can be better-designed when local knowledge is brought to bear • Services can be joined up more effectively at a local level • Services are better if decisions about them are made at the local level • Services designed locally offer more scope for innovation and diversity

3.3	The arguments have been examined in turn within the report with analysis given over to what the report refers to as the 'neighbourhood services' which could be considered for further devolution from the central to the local.
3.4	Neighbourhood services has been used a term to bring together and describe up to 70 functions undertaken at a local government level by English councils of different types and levels (i.e. unitary councils, county councils and district councils). For the purpose of analysis within the report the areas within Neighbourhood Services includes (i) highways and transport; (ii) cultural services; (iii) environmental and regulatory services; (iv) planning and development.
3.5	A draft response included at appendix B to this paper.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: not applicable
	Human: not applicable
	Risk Management: not applicable
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: not applicable
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the committee considers and approves the draft response to the NILGA report on Devolution within Northern Ireland.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A: Correspondence and Report on Devolution within Northern Ireland Appendix B: Draft response