NILGA

KEY INFORMATION BULLETIN

11th May 2012

This Bulletin provides your Council with key information being taken forward through Councils, NILGA actions and partners, delivering results for our sector. The Bulletin is supplied for distribution at a Full Council or Council Committee meeting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME

The first meeting of the Regional Transition Committee (RTC) took place on 25th April 2012. Attendees consistently highlighted the need for funding Reform's up-front costs. Governance of this Committee, too, was far from clear. The Departments papers were noted, not agreed.

Action 1 - NILGA, Councils and SoLACE are preparing a "Mission Critical" **funding position** which the Department will receive during May 2012. From figures gleaned from most VTCs, and from correspondence from councils supporting this funding "push" from the Association, at least £2.2 million is required to trigger substantive work across the eleven proposed Voluntary Transition Committees.

Action 2 - Governance proposals must come from local government and will be presented to the Department in order to secure full ownership & buy in by councils, which is not presently the case. The proliferation of working groups could through integration be dynamically and simply advanced.

Action 3 - Since this meeting, many attendees have recognised the value in NILGA providing **both facilities and a regional briefing, prior to future RTC meetings,** to ensure a "whole sector" approach and to enable dynamic updates to be given, in advance of each RTC session. *This service will be provided by NILGA from June 2012.*

NILGA would assert that local government should be able to put papers and positions, with recommendations, to the RTC. Again, this service will be provided by the Association based on requests and needs. Applying key determinants from other Reform programmes, including Scotland and Wales, can be done successfully and immediately, as NILGA has negotiated this data provision as part of the Local Government Group throughout the UK, numbering 550 Councils. *This service will be applied immediately.*

PLANNING SEMINAR 14th JUNE, BELFAST - *SPECIAL NILGA OFFER!*

This agendaNi facilitated planning seminar will examine key issues around the future of the planning system, including planning reform, which will see the local government sector take on an enhanced role in relation to planning. Full programme available online at www.agendaNi.com/events

Speakers include: - *Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, MLA* **-** *Mary MacIntyre, Director of Strategic Planning, DoE Planning* **-** *Alderman Jim Dillon, Chair, Planning Sub-Group, NILGA* **-** *Jim Mackinnon, Scotland's Chief Planner* **-** *Geraint Ellis, School of Planning, Architecture & Civil Engineering, QUB.*

Negotiated by NILGA, a limited special discounted rate of **£125 ex VAT** (full fee £175) is available for local government elected representatives and officers wishing to attend. To secure your place at the discounted rate please contact agendaNi directly on 028 9261 9933 or email registration@agendaNi.com

Please reference NILGA when making your booking to secure the reduced rate.

NILGA FULL MEMBERS MEETING

The next NILGA Full Members meeting is taking place on the 25th May 2012 in the Roe Valley Arts & Cultural Centre, Limavady, BT49 0FJ. In addition to key NILGA business, Tommy O'Reilly, Chief Executive of the Social Security Agency, will make a presentation to Members focusing on Welfare Reform. For further information, please contact Sarah Little on 028 9079 8972 or s.little@nilga.org

IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATION AND EFFICIENCY (ICE) PROGRAMME UPDATE

The next meeting of the Regional Governance Group is taking place on the 13th June 2012, 12.30pm at the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club. The next meeting of the Regional Chief Executive's Group is taking place on the **1st June 2012** in Magherafelt Council Offices. The I.C.E. website is now viewable through www.nilga.org

For further information please contact the ICE administration team at ice@nilga.org

COUNCIL STRUCTURAL FUNDS - NILGA ENGAGED IN CRITICAL TALKS

NILGA affirms that Europe should begin and end in its regions and cities.

It is currently engaged with OFMDFM, DFP, DETI and the European Commission in drafting for consultation a regional proposal for the management and delivery of future local government funding strands under the next EU investment period 2014 -2020. Under the draft proposal, future EU Structural Funds investment can be more effectively sub-delegated to councils to directly administer and deliver.

The administrative, procedural and audit requirements of the current EU Funding Programme cannot be allowed to be repeated. EU money must be efficiently delivered as quickly as possible without unnecessary bureaucracy, and increased council engagement will enable Structural Funds to be targeted to address those issues of greatest priority for people and places at local level, affirming subsidiarity at the lowest point of democratic decision making – the most advantageous level of investment return in terms of constitutional government, and participatory democracy.

Councils will be fully consulted during June and July 2012 on the EU investment proposal. **This is a local government driven initiative, and can be designed, delivered and implemented in real partnership with central government and the European Commission.**

DELIVERING WORKFORCE EFFICIENCY WORKSHOP

The Delivering Workforce Efficiency workshop was hosted by NILGA in association with the LGA on 2nd May 2012 at the Hilton, Templepatrick and was attended by a variety of participants including Councillors, Council Chief Executives, human resources professionals and other council officers. The workshop examined and looked at various strategies and initiatives taken by councils across the UK to drive greater efficiency and productivity in the workforce. Participants expressed particular interest in sessions dealing with new methods of developing "fit for purpose" organisational structures. For further information, please contact Nuala McCann on 028 9079 8972 or n.mccann@nilga.org

2012 OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY - NORTHERN IRELAND EVENING CELEBRATIONS

Over 5 days from the 3rd – 7th June 2012, the Torch Route will take in over 60 stops across Northern Ireland. The main evening celebration events are ticketed, please contact the relevant council for further information, the evening celebrations are:

(1) East Strand Car Park, Portrush on 3rd June - Coleraine Borough Council
For details please log on to www.colerainebc.gov.uk or www.northcoastni.com

(2) St Columb's Park, Derry, Londonderry on 4th June - Derry City Council
For details please log on to www.derrycity.gov.uk/bigflamefestival

(3) Páirc Esler, Newry on 5th June - Newry and Mourne District Council
For details of all events please log onto www.visitnewryandmourne.com

(4) Belfast City Hall, Belfast on 6th June - Belfast City Council
Full details available from www.belfastcity.gov.uk/events

NILGA - Your Local Government Association

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