



# Energising Local Government

**NILGA Annual Report**  
2010-2011

# Contents



<b>President's Welcome</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chief Executive's Commentary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Key Achievements 2010/11 – A Synopsis</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Performance Report A - Developing Local Government policy and influencing Central Government</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Performance Report B - Providing effective and efficient services to Local Government</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Performance Report C - Providing effective and innovative communication across the sector and with stakeholders</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Performance Report D - Building strong relationships – the resources to do the job</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Performance Report E - NILGA Financial Report</b>	<b>16</b>

## NILGA Office Bearers



**Councillor Sean McPeake**



**Alderman Arnold Hatch**



**Councillor Evelyne Robinson (President)**



**Councillor Dermot Curran**



**Alderman Tom Ekin**

## President's Welcome



In writing this, the tenth annual report of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), I am immediately reminded that periods of uncertainty and austerity in public and political life require organisations which perform the vital roles within their sector of showing leadership, reaching out to willing

(and even the unwilling) key partners, and taking decisions in the interests of sustainability and the strengthening of those they represent.

NILGA's 2010/11 year, as this Annual Report shows, demonstrated commitment and performance across its range of working groups, lobbying exercises and key policy consultations, even amidst the austerity and uncertainty referred to above.

The Review of Public Administration (RPA), despite a thorough and determined approach by the sector with demonstrable and acknowledged political leadership driven by NILGA, was put in abeyance until wider political and budgetary certainties could emerge.

In the meantime the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) Programme was conceived, offering local government formal and informal opportunities to work together as Councils and with other partners to reduce costs, affirm quality, and share services – making local government in Northern Ireland not only contemporary but value for money. This self-help initiative was designed in partnership and endorsed by NILGA, and through extensive consultation in late 2010 and early 2011 was affirmed by the sector as a programme of work that could be linked to the wider reform and modernisation agenda or done in isolation – cost reductions, shared services and an enhanced way of working would result regardless. Again, NILGA's leadership role was substantial and necessary.

How motivating and refreshing it would be if the wider reform agenda opened up a more comprehensive programme of change and a contemporary structure for our public sector, giving local government a broader challenge, a place at the table, enabling genuinely integrated, effective and efficient public services to emerge

in a dynamic environment, rather than sluggishly, little piece by little piece, with processes and debate on many occasions the only outcomes.

During 2010/11, NILGA remained a strong and professional voice for more evidence based change, supported by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the Councils who determine our membership, and partner groups from business and community organisations, unions, and including specialist officer teams within our local authorities.

During 2010/11, NILGA responded to no less than 32 consultations. It achieved through specialist officers in the sector the restoration of **£1.15 million** to local authorities from the Department of the Environment's Resource Grant, held 35 events and workshops on critical issues affecting councils including the Planning Bill and the Local Government Reform Bill – perhaps the two greatest opportunities and challenges facing Councils in the next three or four years. We received new investment from OFMDFM and the UK Border Agency to support a Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership, co-ordinated by NILGA, conceived to bring evidence of economic migration patterns and impacts within local councils straight to decision makers in government, in order to plan our local economies and service their associated diverse workforces better.

Once again, this serves as an example of NILGA's forward planning, investment in sustainable and necessary work and willingness to co-ordinate the actions and information provided by others to produce integrated government. Our thanks are due to the LGA in England, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Council of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) for their very real assistance and advice on this and many other policies and actions during 2010/11.

Of course, as an Annual Report, performance and accounting for our actions should be supplemented with gratitude. As NILGA's President, I am indebted to my fellow Office Bearers who continued to offer selfless and clear guidance throughout the year. Similarly, the NILGA Executive and Full Members showed true leadership in terms of consolidation of NILGA itself, support for restructuring, policy determinations on Planning and scores of other key consultations, input and advice in respect of our February 2011 Conference and the Local Government Awards.

Similarly, to colleagues in SOLACE, the Chief Executive advisory role remained an essential rudder for, in particular, our consultation events and Executive meetings. Independent advice, whether legal in terms of our premises, governance in terms of our risk assessments or horticultural in terms of Ulster in Bloom, enabled high levels of performance, accountability and colour throughout the year. Officers in Government Departments, and their Ministers - in particular but not exclusively DoE Local Government and Planning Division - must be thanked for their accessibility, even if at times local government sought to challenge and "agree to disagree". Some things never change, NILGA will remain a formidable ally or opponent, but gratitude is a virtue.

Additional words of thanks must be given to the present and past staff of NILGA. Having appointed a new Chief Executive in March 2011, the last quarter of this financial year 2010/2011 may be best recalled as one of significant change in our personnel, with many employees, seconded and fixed term staff, leaving NILGA. The Association benefitted enormously because of their input and commitment and my thanks go to each and every one of them. The resilience of our present team is second to none and again on behalf of NILGA's membership, my thanks go to the new team that will affirm the Association as a secure, sustainable, credible force in local government in Northern Ireland and the rest of Europe.

NILGA delivers, often in spite of the environment surrounding it. So it has proved once again in this Annual report year. As we move to our tenth anniversary in 2012, I am reminded of Mr John F Kennedy's comments on leadership:

***There are risks and costs to a programme of action, but they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.***

I commend this Annual Report to you as members of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and take great pride in our collective performance, as your President.



**Cllr Evelyne L Robinson**  
President, Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)

## Chief Executive's Commentary



Having served local government for fifteen years I was privileged to take up the position of Chief Executive of NILGA in March 2011, just at the conclusion of this Annual Report year 2010/11.

As with any Annual Report, looking back is only part of the deal. NILGA has been described, literally at the time of writing this commentary, as an "exciting" Association by one Council Chief Executive, and by another Council as an organisation which has "dynamically evolved" not just as a reaction to the wider uncertainty and fragility surrounding the global economy, Northern Ireland's public sector and our Councils, but, in equal part, because we ourselves needed and wanted to make changes.

When the NILGA Full Members and Executive discussed and subsequently endorsed in June 2011 our Corporate, Working Group, Staffing, Budgetary and other long term planning determinants for 2011/12 and the rest of this electoral period, it reflected a lot of work done by a lot of people during 2010/11.

I am grateful to them all.

The endorsement was testimony to our membership which showed courage and vision in taking radical steps to put NILGA on a sustainable footing, ready indeed for more necessary change internally and externally.

This Annual Report is the first of a sequence of time bound, output driven, strategic and operational actions which when delivered will mandate NILGA to represent the local government sector at political level in a credible, sustainable and member driven manner – through to 2016.

My commentary therefore is driven by a determination to deliver further change in response to need, consultation with the sector, a new diaspora offered by the local government and NI Assembly elections in May 2011, a new Executive in NILGA, and 71 new, full members and the balance of 78 more experienced politicians.

NILGA must commit to:

- (a) Proposing changes to the Constitution in order to strengthen NILGA's support for and partnership with the sector;
- (b) The completion of an independent review supported by internal (within NILGA) and external (within local government) drivers to provide a clear evidence base for determining our Corporate Plan and related Framework of Engagement with Member Councils for the period April 2012 – December 2015;
- (c) The completion of consultation on and the delivery of a Corporate Plan for NILGA for the period April 2012 – December 2015.

These three inter-related actions, whilst determining a member driven, sustainable, accountable and innovative NILGA, will also enable a credible foundation for our lobbying and engagement work for the sector we serve.

Whether

- (i) challenging central government to work in partnership with Councils, offering practical, measured consultation on policy, legislative, investment and related significant matters affecting Councils, our fragile local economies and our ratepayers;
- (ii) shaping and delivering a practical, fit for purpose Planning system in Northern Ireland;
- (iii) seeking and designing greater local impact and delivery in terms of EU Structural Funds, to yield better returns for our communities;
- (iv) planning, investing in and co-ordinating elected member development in partnership;
- (v) having proper engagement in *anticipation of* (rather than being coerced to provide reactions to) the proposed transfer of functions;

A strong and professional NILGA, delivering the right information presented by the right democratic and collective political grouping to the right audience at the right time will add **immeasurable value** to Councils and our local government sector in Northern Ireland.

We may all wish to reflect on the Seven Principles of Public Life, communicated by the Northern Ireland Executive as part of the present Programme for Government:

*Selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.*

On a personal level I would add energy and vision to these principles.

The Northern Ireland Local Government Association upholds equally all of these principles.

Our 2010/11 Annual Report closes a dynamic chapter in its ten year history, and opens a new decade of even greater challenges and opportunities ahead.

To our partners - as we are doing in NILGA - I say don't create fear, create confidence. Don't offer blame, correct mistakes. Don't assume knowledge, ask questions. Don't make our shared work drudgery, make it interesting. Don't be interested in yourself; be interested in all of us.

***NILGA is a formidable force, ready and able to deliver, and is proud to serve an exciting sector in exciting times.***

***Our results, by the time of the next Annual Report, will, like the year just past, be testimony to this.***



**Derek McCallan**  
Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)



# NILGA Key Achievements 2010/11– A Synopsis

- Restored £1.15 million of the DoE General Grant Resources element for the 18 affected councils
- Additional £11 million levered into Local Government through reinvigoration of the EU Competitiveness and Employment Program, giving councils access to £44 million LED financial support
- £235k new investment from OFMDFM and UK Borders Agency for Strategic Migration Work
- Successful lobbying of DRD to retain £107 million for maintenance and landscaping in and around towns and villages
- £9.52 million retained by councils over the past two years through effective national pay negotiations
- Regional recognition of the key role of local councils, e.g. within the Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan
- £3.85 million additional project funding agreed for councils for environmentally friendly transport projects, such as active travel and electric vehicles
- Delivery of the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (I.C.E.) consultation in partnership.

## Performance Report A - Developing Local Government policy and influencing Central Government

### NILGA Full meetings

During the year, five Full Members' meetings were held, for the 147 elected councillors who represent their councils on the Association and the 25 Chief Executives. These meetings focussed on key policy issues, to enable strategic local government debate on issues such as: urban regeneration, tourism, the ICE programme, the future role of NILGA, the 2011-14 NI Budget and Comprehensive Spending Review, planning policy and welfare of animals. A Mayors and Chairs event was also held in August 2010, to assist in developing relationships within the sector.



*Mayors and Chairs from councils across Northern Ireland attend NILGA's 2010 Mayors and Chairs meeting which was held in Antrim Civic Centre (Aug. 2010).*

### NILGA Executive meetings

The NILGA Executive Committee met 11 times, to oversee ongoing business and to provide direction for the work of the Association. These meetings provided an opportunity to discuss policy issues and reports from working groups and to consider responses to government consultations and requests for evidence from Assembly Committees. The Executive also provided a key element of design and democratic scrutiny for the developing ICE programme.

### Working with the Assembly

NILGA's policy work continues to increase, and this has contributed to the development of a good working relationship with Assembly Committees, particularly the Environment Committee. NILGA is now regarded as the key contact for local government by the committee members and staff, facilitating the provision of written and oral evidence on issues relevant to local government. As a sector, local government has been instrumental in shaping much of the new legislation that will affect us in the future, through this work.

The role of NILGA in these areas is very much one of co-ordination and strategic support to the specialist local government officers who are giving evidence on matters of concern. The NILGA members and staff would particularly like to thank all of the local government officers who have agreed to give evidence on behalf of local government in the past year and who have helped in compiling written evidence and consultation

responses. This has helped to ensure that the sector has had a strong, co-ordinated, unified voice which is heard and listened to.

### Working with Government Departments

The NILGA relationship with central government departments continues to evolve. The work of the Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels was brought to a conclusion, but partnership working and consultation took place to hone more finely the local government reform policy proposals prior to the production of the Local Government Bill. In the past year, NILGA has developed its relationship with the DOE on waste management, through the Minister chaired Waste Programme Board, with Cllr Shaun Gallagher as Vice Chairman. The partnership relationship with DETI and InvestNI developed well, through the efforts of the Economic Development Working Group, and work continues with DRD to try to find a solution to the perennial winter maintenance issues.

Most Departments now view local government as a partner, or at the very least, a key stakeholder in the policy development process. We are ensuring that NILGA is an initial point of communication at the early stages of policy and strategy development. The NILGA lobbying role is much stronger when 'pushing at an open door'.



*Minister Edwin Poots, Department of Environment, Cllr Evelyne Robinson, NILGA President and Minister Alex Attwood, Department of Social Development support a NILGA organised event.*

## 2010/11 Workshops, Meetings for and with Councils and Policy Co-ordination – At a Glance

### (i) Meetings with Ministers

Date	Department	Minister Presiding	Topic
May 2010	DOE	Edwin Poots	Waste Programme Governance
June 2010	DOE	Edwin Poots	Council reform and the options for going forward
July 2010	DOE	Edwin Poots	Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) Agenda
July 2010	DOJ	David Ford	Future working for DPPs and CSPs
August 2010	DOE	Edwin Poots	Lobby against Cut in General Grant (Resources Element)
September 2010	DOE	Edwin Poots	Local Government Reform
September & November 2010 January & March 2011	DOE	Edwin Poots	Waste Programme Board Meetings
October 2010	DETI	Arlene Foster	Economy
December 2010	DRD	Conor Murphy	Salting of Footpaths
December 2010	DOE	Edwin Poots	Local Government Reform
January 2011	DOE	Edwin Poots	Planning Forum
February 2011	DOE	Edwin Poots	Waste Funding
February 2011	DOE	Edwin Poots	Budget and Local Government funding
February 2011	DCAL	Nelson McCausland	2012 Engagement
March 2011	DARD	Michelle Gildernew	Welfare of Animals

**(ii) Sector Consultation Events (majority attracting external funding without cost to the sector)**

Date	Topic
April 2010	NI Tourism Strategy
May 2010	Urban regeneration and community development framework
June 2010	Road safety consultation
June 2010	Reform funding
June 2010	Efficiencies and Improvement (I.C.E.)
July 2010	Reform engagement, ministerial meeting
July 2010	Mentor training for Women in Local Councils mentoring scheme
August 2010	Olympic 2012 Games council delegation to Hull
August 2010	Mayors and Chairs meeting
September 2010	Norwegian EU Investment and Advice Visit (to NI) – hosted
September 2010	Waste Storage Guide launch
October 2010	Olympic 2012 Games Business breakfast, Coleraine
October 2010	Sustainable Development Implementation Plan
October 2010	Local Democracy Week
October 2010	NILGA EU Conference
November 2010	New Zealand Visit (to NI) – hosted
November 2010	EU Congress workshop
December 2010	EU Local Enterprise
December 2010	Obesity Prevention Strategy
December 2010	Engagement with Mediation NI and LG reps from Macedonia
January 2011	Planning Bill
January 2011	Olympic 2012 Games engagement, Belfast City Hall
February 2011	Local Government engagement – Reform (4 events) and ICE (4 events)
March 2011	NI Regional Development Strategy
November 2010 – February 2011	Party conferences, Alliance, UUP, DUP and SDLP (SF conference delayed due to election)
February 2011	NILGA Conference
February 2011	Local Government Awards Northern Ireland

**(iii) Consultation Responses Submitted**

*NB: Copies of the responses are available at [www.nilga.org](http://www.nilga.org)*

Clean Neighbourhoods Bill	Fuel Poverty Strategy	Review of PPS11
Draft Regeneration and Housing Bill	Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector	Planning Fees Consultation
Local Partnership Working on Policing and Community Safety	Independent Public Service Pensions Commission	Northern Ireland Youth Assembly
Road Safety Strategy	Single Electricity Market	Local Government Pension Scheme - Councillors' Pensions
Urban Regeneration and Housing	Sustainable Development Implementation Plan Update	Budget and spending plans
Tourism Strategy	Community Use of Schools Premises	Regional Development Strategy
Roads (Transfer of Functions) Bill	Fitter Future for All: Obesity Prevention Framework for Northern Ireland 2011 – 2021	Fly tipping Protocol
Land filling of Certain Wastes consultation	Waste Framework Directive Stage 2 response	Local Government Reform
Meeting EU Landfill Diversion Targets	Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy	CAP Reform
Draft Amendment to the landfill regulations NI 2003	Supporting owner occupiers in redevelopment areas	High Hedges
Introduction of Restrictions on the Land filling of certain Wastes	Review of Landlord (article 21) Rating Allowance	
Stage 2 of the Waste Framework Directive	PPS16	

**(iv) NI Assembly Committees - Written and Oral Evidence submitted to:**

Social Development Committee re Caravans Bill	Planning letter to all MLAs	Social Development Committee re Housing Amendment Bill
Environment Committee re Waste and Contaminated Land Bill	Resources letter to all MLAs	Regional Development Committee re Budget
Environment Committee re High Hedges	Environment Committee re Local Government Finance Bill	Environment Committee re Planning Bill
Social Development Committee re Safeguarding Board Bill	Enterprise Trade and Investment Committee re Tourism Bill	Regional Development Committee re Footpaths
Enterprise Trade and Investment Committee re Tourism (Amendment) Bill	Environment Committee re High Hedges Bill	Social Development Committee re Planning
Social Development Committee re Housing Bill	Agriculture and Rural Development Committee re Welfare of Animals and Dogs Bills	Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan
Regional Development Committee re Transport Bill	Environment Committee re Clean Neighbourhoods Bill	
Environment Committee re Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill	Agriculture and Rural Development Committee re Welfare of Animals Bill	

**(v) Meetings with Assembly Committee Chairs (Lobbying campaign on planning)**

Date	
August 2010	Meeting with Chair of the Enterprise, Trade & Investment Committee, Alban Magennis MLA
September 2010	Meeting with the Regional Development Committee on Planning
September 2010	Meeting with Chair of the Environment Committee, Cathal Boylan MLA

**(vi) Waste Meetings supported by NILGA (Funded by DoE)**

Strategic Waste Board meeting – refreshed to become Waste Programme Board
Waste Programme Board – four meetings during 2010/11

**(vii) Working Group Reports**

A key strategic role of NILGA is the provision of a structure for elected member scrutiny of and input into, major issues faced by the Councils. Working Groups provide a key mechanism to address issues, create actions, including lobbying and partnership working, to improve the case for Councils and ratepayers. The NILGA Working groups are supported by local government officers to ensure that policy is informed by those working at operational level. **NILGA members would like to reiterate their thanks to all those who have provided support for this work, as it would not be possible or practical without their involvement.**

**Strategic Policy Committee**

The Strategic Policy Committee met three times during the year to examine the NILGA policy workload and to set priorities, particularly regarding the prioritisation of consultation responses. The group also allowed for integration

of the various strands of NILGA policy work, giving the working group chairs an opportunity to discuss the impact of cross-cutting issues, and embark on projects of mutual concern. Issues considered by the group included the democratic deficit, use of consultants by councils, the discontinuation of the Policylink bulletin by OFMDFM and the resulting impact on government transparency, and the redesign of NILGA policy working groups to be implemented after the 2011 election.

*Chair: Cllr Peter Weir Vice Chair: Cllr Sean McPeake*

**Review of Public Administration Working Group**

The RPA Working Group continued to lead the Local Government RPA work and support the work of the Strategic Leadership Board. Key issues considered by the group included appropriate models, including I.C.E., to ensure collaboration across Local Government as an alternative to the proposed statutory Business Services Organisation (BSO) and funding reform.

*Chair: Ald Arnold Hatch Vice Chair: Cllr Sean McPeake*

### Planning Working Group

The Planning Working Group had an extremely busy year, ensuring that Planning was considered as a priority by the Assembly. The Group led a successful lobbying campaign, in partnership with the Economic Development Working Group, meeting five Assembly committees to discuss councils concerns at the negative impact current difficulties with the planning system were having on local economic development. The Group led on local government input to the Planning Bill, facilitating a well attended policy event in January 2011, and provided strategic written and oral evidence to the Environment Committee on the Bill. The Group also lobbied strongly to ensure the production of strategic planning policy was expedited, and this year has seen the production of PPS16, and a review of PPS11. The Group has been keen to monitor the ongoing changes to the Planning Service and has worked with the Department to input into changes to fee mechanisms, and to develop implementation plans for reform and transfer of the planning function. In recognition of the importance of planning, the Minister has also created a new cross-sectoral planning forum, which is attended by the chair of the Group and the NILGA Chief Executive. The Group also oversaw the NILGA policy event and response in relation to the review of the Regional Development Strategy.

*Chair: Cllr Jack Beattie Vice Chair: Cllr Dermot Curran*

### EU Working Group

During 2010/11, the EU Working Group continued to support councillors on regional EU Programme bodies, and support councils to maximise EU funding opportunities, while monitoring the impact of EU policies on local service delivery. Democratic scrutiny and subsidiary (getting more effective management and benefits locally of EU funds) remain the core focus of the Group, delivered to councils through EU Programme technical assistance, policy support and lobbying. In consultation with councils, the Group set the local EU agenda based on real community and economic needs and in May evidence was provided to the Assembly DoE Committee on the role of councils in Europe and the better use of EU funds to support councils tackling the recession. In partnership with the Economic Development Group and the LED Forum, the Group secured from the EU Competitiveness Programme, an additional £11million leverage investment through the DETI Minister and Invest NI and in response to increased council funding needs, the Group held an EU conference on "Maximising the Impact of EU Funds" in October. As part of the UK Local Government Group (LGA, COSLA & WLGA), the Group has successfully limited the impact of EU policies on local council services, particularly in lobbying against punitive fines under the proposed

EU Late Payments Directive. In January, members attended a UK Local Government Group summit with the UK Government's Representative in Europe and voiced local council views on the future of EU structural funds and the EU budget. We continue to work closely with our local government and NI Assembly representatives on the Committee of the Regions in order to scrutinise and amend draft EU policy papers, successfully gaining amendments to the Opinion Paper on the 'Future of Cohesion Policy'. As part of the NILGA conference, the Group facilitated two key EU sessions and has continued to strengthen its strategic partnerships on EU affairs with key EU bodies, while acknowledging the critical support role played by OFMDFM, DFP, DETI, DARD and our MEPs in supporting the strengthening of Councils European engagement and impact.

*Chair: Cllr Jonathan Bell Vice Chair: Cllr Tim Attwood*



*Supporting the NILGA Event on 'Maximising the Impact of EU Funds' in Templepatrick (October 2010) are Ald Arnold Hatch, NILGA Vice President, First Minister, Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, Cllr Evelyne Robinson, NILGA President, Cllr David Sparks, Local Government Association, England, Cllr Jonathan Bell MLA, Chair of the Local Government EU Working Group and Cllr Tim Attwood, Belfast City Council.*

### Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP)

In 2010 the NILGA executive approved and welcomed the opportunity to act as Lead Partner for the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership. The Partnership will increase benefits to councils by facilitating direct contact between councils and the Northern Ireland Executive on issues around migration, as well as improving information and support to councils dealing with the impacts of migration. It joins 11 other strategic migration partnership in Local Government Associations throughout the UK. The project is entirely funded by the UK Border Agency.

*Chair: Ald Arnold Hatch Vice Chair: Ald Geraldine Rice*

### **Economic Development Working Group**

This group met six times in 2010/11, focussing on the fragile economic situation and the implications for local economies in Northern Ireland, particularly small and medium sized enterprises and the social economy. Strong relationships were established with DETI and InvestNI, and the group met with Minister Foster to discuss the local government role in reinvigorating the 2007-13 Competitiveness Programme. An additional £11million leverage investment was made available through Minister Foster, DETI and Invest NI, secured not only by political lobbying through NILGA but, also, evidence based presentations by the NI LED Forum. Members were particularly keen to ensure that local councils accessed and made use of all EU funding open to them for economic development activity. The Working Group made sure that local government views were taken into account on issues such as the Tourism Strategy, the small business rate relief scheme, legislative responsibility/ future funding for local economic development, transfer of economic development functions, the Independent Review of Economic Policy, and the Economic Strategy. The group also played a significant role in the 2011 NILGA conference.

*Chair: Cllr David Rodway Vice Chair: Cllr Eddie Rea*

### **Waste Working Group**

The Waste Working Group had another extremely productive year, facilitating a refreshed regional waste policy forum (the Waste Programme Board), facilitating the production of local government policy positions - building on the work of the three Waste Management Groups, and responding to a large number of complex waste management consultations (6 of the total 32 that NILGA has responded to this year) including a revised EU Waste Framework Directive. In addition to the bimonthly Waste Programme Board meetings, the Group met the Minister twice during the year, to discuss governance and funding for the waste programme. The removal of the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund was a huge disappointment for the sector, but the group has been keen to work in partnership with the Department to deliver extra funding when and where possible, e.g. through the Rethink Waste Fund. The Group was pleased to see a shift in the DoE's emphasis away from councils, who have been performing very well, to begin to look at commercial, industrial and construction waste. More emphasis is also being given to waste prevention, including the reduction of packaging waste, which should have a positive impact on costs, in the longer term. The Group also led on attempts to develop a fly-tipping protocol between regulators and landowners in Northern Ireland, work on which is still in progress. The Waste Working Group has now been amalgamated with the NILGA Health and Environment

Working Group, to assist in incorporating waste management within policy on sustainable development and climate change mitigation.

*Chair: Cllr Shaun Gallagher Vice Chair: Cllr Sean McGuigan*



*Promoting the launch of the 'Waste Storage Guide' in Belfast (September 2010) are Cllr Shaun Gallagher, Chair of the NILGA Waste Working Group, Minister Edwin Poots, Department of Environment, Tim Walker, National President of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Michael Whitley, Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA).*

### **Health and Environment Working Group**

The Health and Environment Working Group has taken forward a massive policy agenda over the last year. Leading on wider environmental and health issues, the Group has ensured that the local government voice has been heard on issues such as sustainable development, fuel poverty, obesity prevention, smoke-free policy, housing, biodiversity, climate change, health pilots, high hedges, road safety, and the Clean Neighbourhoods Bill. The major successes for this group this year were ensuring that local government was written into the implementation plan for the Sustainable Development Strategy, and that the Clean Neighbourhoods Bill has been enacted. The Group has been amalgamated with the Waste Working Group to ensure a more integrated policy approach on environmental issues within NILGA. Forward working will include ensuring the formation of a local government sustainable development forum, as requested by members and officers from across the sector.

*Chair: Cllr Jenny Palmer Vice Chair: Cllr Joan Baird*

### **Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group**

The Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group was actively involved this year in supporting councils on a wide range of relevant policies and actions directly affecting the rural community. The Group undertook an extensive survey with the sector on potential further reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy. Results from the survey were collated and members of the Group engaged with a range of partners in the

Northern Ireland Assembly, Whitehall and Brussels on this important policy area to support council service delivery. The Group also continued to engage with the Department for Agricultural and Rural Development and the Committee for Agricultural and Rural Development to ensure that the voice of local government was heard when developing proposals relating to the Welfare of Animals Act and the Dogs (Amendment) Act. The Group played a full part in rural policy making including work to develop a Rural White Paper and Action Plan.

*Chair: Cllr Bert Wilson Vice Chair: Cllr Patsy Toman  
Co-ordination – Mr Alan Burke (CEO, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council)*

#### **Audit and Risk Committee**

NILGA has retained a bespoke Audit and Risk Committee which will, it is proposed, be supported

through the maintenance of an independent Chair (Dr Bill Smith held this office in the period until the May 2011 elections). A Draft Risk Register (prepared March 2011) is to be further defined by this Committee and approved by the NILGA Executive, but until the important issue of DoE potential investment and other support from non Council sources is clearly determined, by way of Letters of Offer, the Committee will be retained but not sit until key work and decisions require. In the meantime, the Committee membership will be confirmed as a contingency. NILGA continues to work with the Association's independent financial auditor to ensure the operational effectiveness of the audit function through the application of good practice standards.

*Independent Chair: Dr Bill Smith*

## **Performance Report B - Providing effective and efficient services to Local Government**

### **(i) Workforce**

We have entered a second year of standstill on local government pay scales (a third year for the most senior employees) as councils across the UK come to terms with severely reduced funding and other constraints.

NILGA would estimate that **each year** of unchanged pay scales has reduced costs for Northern Ireland councils by at least £6-7 million.

This, together with job losses and pensions reform, represents a difficult national employee relations climate. It is expected that comprehensive consultations with council employers will take place later this year as we envisage discussions with trade unions regarding 2012 and beyond. Members of the Employers Side of the NIJC we will articulate very positively the views of Northern Ireland councils within these discussions. A key issue within all of this has been the reform of public sector pensions, and in particular the local government schemes, in the face of serious political and wider concern around the future sustainability of those schemes whilst still wishing to maintain quality pension provision.

At a Northern Ireland level, a review of the existing negotiating and consultation arrangements is ongoing. This has not been moving as quickly as the Employers Side would wish and consequently action is being taken to re-energise the process in consultation with the Labour Relations Agency. Outputs from this will be the subject of full consultation with councils at an early stage.

In keeping with NILGA's corporate priorities, during 2010/11 we commenced a major initiative to support and promote elected member development in Councils, reflecting the priorities set by members and endorsed by Councils. This has involved the application of an ***Elected Member Development Charter*** – the Charter is a standard of good practice to underpin member development. Working with partners, we have directly supported four pilot projects involving Belfast City Council, Strabane District Council and the clusters of Down and Newry and Mourne Councils and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Councils.

The pilot councils have been making excellent progress towards the standard and the first assessment is scheduled for November 2011 which would represent a huge effort and output by all involved.

We are seeking funding and support on an ongoing basis for further extension of the Charter and hope to make further progress on this during the Autumn. We are establishing an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders in this area and in particular the National Association of Councillors.

At a European level we have continued our involvement with the European public sector employers body CEEP (European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services). This gives us a voice in key discussions on workforce matters, via the UK section, on important EU level regulation including in upcoming discussions on revisions to the Working Time Directive.



*Signing the NI Elected Member Development Charter in Craigavon Civic Centre (April 2010) are Cllr Jim Speers (Mayor of Armagh), Alderman Stephen Moutray (Mayor Craigavon) and Cllr Patrick McAleenan of Banbridge District Council.*

### (ii) Olympics 2012

The NI 2012 Local Government Group is administered and supported by NILGA to facilitate councils in identifying and availing of the opportunities identified through the London 2012 Games. Membership of the group is supported by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's 2012/2013 Games Legacy Unit. The Groups objective is to ensure that NI local government engages in 2012 activities and is included in communications across the United Kingdom. Through NILGA, the Group issues regular 2012 news bulletins, 2012 business opportunities and host and support engagement events in the lead up to the 2012.

*Chair: Cllr Maurice Bradley, Vice Chair: Cllr Sean Begley*



*President of the NILGA, Cllr Evelyne Robinson, accompanied by Chair of the Local Government 2012 Olympic Committee, Cllr Maurice Bradley, welcomes Lord Coe on his visit to Northern Ireland, as NILGA promotes local government's support and participation.*

### (iii) Ulster in Bloom

The Ulster in Bloom competition, now in its 32<sup>nd</sup> year, continues to attract great interest and support from councils, local 'In – Bloom'

committees, the business community and many residents from across Northern Ireland. In 2010, 23 council areas participated entering a total of 130 places in the various categories as well as 36 bus and rail stations. The judging panel reported a very noticeable improvement in standards of horticulture, which produces floral displays and sustainable planting that equal the best in Britain. Places are judged using the criteria set by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). The key areas focused on are horticultural achievement, environmental responsibility and community participation. Ulster in Bloom is administered, supported and coordinated by NILGA. The competition is funded by Translink, with additional financial contribution from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Northern Ireland continues to be successful in the national 'Britain in Bloom' competition, with Derry City, Coleraine, Ahoghill, Scarva and Bangor all achieving awards in the 2010 competition. This is a very commendable result, bearing in mind Northern Ireland is one of the smallest of the regions within the Britain in Bloom competition. NILGA has negotiated further funding for Ulster in Bloom in 2012, on behalf of councils and the communities they serve.



*Pictured at the Translink Ulster in Bloom 2011 Competition launch in Crawfordsburn are Cllr Evelyne Robinson, NILGA President, Brian Kissick, Magherafelt District Council, Veronica Palmer, Translink Chairman, Ian Millne, Chairman of Magherafelt District Council and Dr Sally Montgomery, NITB board member.*

### (iv) NILGA Conference 2011

The 2011 NILGA Annual Conference was held at the La Mon Hotel and Country Club on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011, hosted by BBC political presenter, Jim Fitzpatrick. Focusing on 'Energising Local Government', the conference was attended by over 100 councillors and senior council representatives from across 24 local councils in Northern Ireland and was supported by the First Minister, Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA and Environment Minister Edwin Poots, MLA.

Utilising the theme of 'Energising Local Government', sessions were held for councillors and council officers to address not only NILGA's achievements but to encourage local government to be aspirational in the strategic planning of

future services. Topics of discussion considered the spending review, the economy and an overview of what the Association has achieved in 2010 and is tasked to take forward over the coming year.



Visual snapshots from Conference 2011

## Performance Report C - Providing effective and innovative communication across the sector and with stakeholders

### (a) Newsletter

A huge effort has been made this year to make the NILGA Newsletter updates relevant and regular, and with this in mind a weekly bulletin was introduced to bring members up to date with the coming week's business, meetings and events. The weekly update has received positive feedback from both local government and external stakeholders. We have also provided more detailed key updates for members on pertinent local government issues which NILGA is driving.

### (b) Website

During the year NILGA's website was redesigned to provide users with a friendlier interface and improved navigation. The new website went live in January 2011 and was actively promoted and much more regular content updates were provided, therefore encouraging more traffic to the site. NILGA is also on Twitter and has a strong following across central and local government.

### (c) Media Coverage

Media coverage has been encouraging throughout the year with an increasing number of press releases being featured and ongoing requests for comments being received from the media. In particular, the President and Chief Executive have given a significant number of TV and radio interviews throughout the year on the key projects being delivered by the Association ranging from the Review of Public Administration to the Welfare of Animals. NILGA is established as the first port of call for many media queries on local government issues and NILGA continues to

develop constructive relationships with the media with a number of local journalists now following us on Twitter.

### (d) Northern Ireland Local Government Awards

The NILGA Conference gala dinner played host to the Local Government Awards Northern Ireland on 10th February 2011. The awards were attended by over 250 people with seven award winners collecting their deserved prizes. Award partners included: Association for Public Service Excellence; National Association of Councillors; SOLACE NI; William Johnston Memorial Trust; NIJC and of course NILGA. The awards event was sponsored by Scotshield with the partners thanking the sponsor for their ongoing commitment and support.



Visual snapshots from the Local Government Awards Northern Ireland 2010



Students from Ballymoney High School Lauren Marshall, Lucy Calderwood and Rebekah McLaughlin with Cllr Evelyne Robinson, President of NILGA and Cllr Malachy McCamphill at Ballymoney Council Chambers for the launch of Local Democracy Week 2010

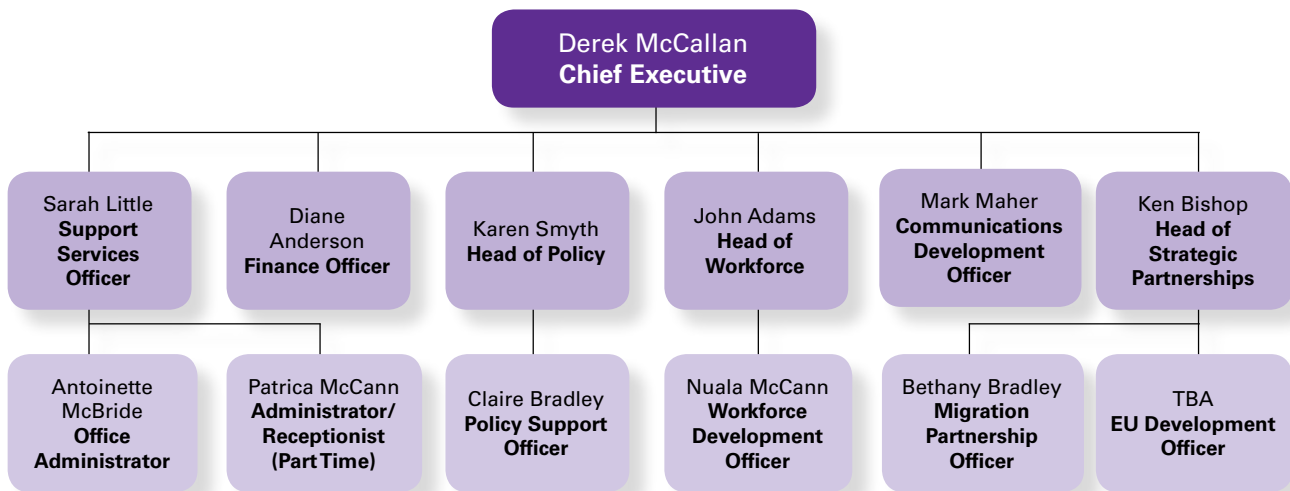
## Local Democracy Week

The 'Local Democracy Week' campaign is about getting young people more involved with, and creating an awareness of their local council. Now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year, NILGA supports and promotes the campaign across councils and provides a tool kit of activities to encourage council engagement.

## Performance Report D - Building strong relationships – the resources to do the job

In order to provide the portfolio of work which the Association performs, NILGA's staff complement has been determined by Members through continued focus on NILGA as an effective, fully representative, cost effective, member driven body.

The staffing structure for 2011/12 is presented below and follows the work of the Executive, Office Bearers and wider team in 2010/11.



In addition to the staffing structure changes, NILGA Working Groups have been rationalised, again with constructive input and agreement of Members.

The sum total of these changes will result in the delivery of a work plan strongly aligned to council key issues, providing central, impartial, robust coordination and advice.

# Performance Report E -

## NILGA Financial Report



### **NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2011**

### **INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' STATEMENT TO THE MEMBERS OF NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

We have examined the summary financial statement of Northern Ireland Local Government Association.

#### **Respective responsibilities of directors and examiner**

The Association is responsible for preparing the summary financial statement in accordance with applicable law. Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement with the full annual accounts, and its compliance with the relevant requirements of Section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and the regulations made thereunder. We also read the other information contained in the summary financial statement and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summary financial statement.

#### **Basis of opinion**

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 "The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement" issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

#### **Opinion**

In my opinion the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual accounts and directors' report of Northern Ireland Local Government Association for the year ended 31st March 2011 and complies with the applicable requirements of Section 427 of the Companies Act 2006, and the regulations made thereunder.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Diamond &amp; Skillen'. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

**Nigel V Skillen FCA**

**Diamond and Skillen**

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor

Sinclair House

89/101 Royal Avenue

Belfast

BT1 1FE

**23rd September 2011**

## Accounts Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

### Income And Expenditure Account

	Notes+	General	DoE Project (see note 8)	Specified Bodies	Forum for Local Govt and the Arts	EU issues	EU DFP	E Govt Fund	NISMP	TOTAL 2011 £	2010 (restated *) £
<b>Receipts</b>											
Annual Subscriptions	2	382,179	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	382,179	373,613
Interest received	3	292	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	292	201
NILGA Annual Conference		38,384	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38,384	61,121
DoE contrib. to Waste Group		15,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,000	15,000
Specified bodies	4	-	-	263,665	-	-	-	-	-	263,665	249,514
Other receipts	5	30,398	568,443	-	13,057	30,000	74,766	-	34,067	750,731	703,030
		466,253	568,443	263,665	13,057	30,000	74,766	-	34,067	1,450,251	1,402,479
<b>Payments</b>											
Administration expenses	6	284,156	565,362	103,842	1,788	-	60,424	-	-	1,015,572	1,058,813
Other expenses	7	95,153	3,081	10,197	1,156	8,825	14,342	11,550	9,388	153,692	169,292
Specified bodies	4	-	-	142,118	-	-	-	-	-	142,118	127,900
NILGA Annual Conference		22,485	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22,485	39,117
Match funding		12,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,000	8,007
Depreciation	9	2,810	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,810	3,580
		416,604	568,443	256,157	2,944	8,825	74,766	11,550	9,388	1,348,677	1,406,709
Operating surplus / (deficit) for the year		49,649	0	7,508	10,113	21,175	0	(11,550)	24,679	101,574	(4,230)
Other recognised gains and losses:											
- FRS17 pension scheme deficit at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011		(315,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(315,000)	0
Total recognised surplus / (deficit) for the year		(265,351)	0	7,508	10,113	21,175	0	(11,550)	24,679	(213,426)	(4,230)
Reserves brought forward	14	218,535	-	36,235	-	32,105	-	64,836	-	351,711	355,941
<b>Reserves carried forward</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>(46,816)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43,743</b>	<b>10,113</b>	<b>53,280</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>53,286</b>	<b>24,679</b>	<b>138,285</b>	<b>351,711</b>

+ Information explaining the notes section can be requested from the NILGA office.

\* The 2010 comparative figures have been restated following a change in income recognition policy. Full details of this change in policy are disclosed note 1.2 of the full financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

There are no recognised gains or losses other than the income and expenditure for the above two financial years.







# Energising Local Government



*"Your Local Government Association"*

Unit 5B Castlereagh Business Park  
478 Castlereagh Road, Belfast, BT5 6BQ

**Tel: +44(0)28 9079 8972**

**Fax: +44(0)28 9079 1248**

**[www.nilga.org](http://www.nilga.org)**

Email: [office@nilga.org](mailto:office@nilga.org)

Follow us on Twitter: @NI\_LGA



Promoting the sustainable management of forests.