



NILGA Response to DfI on the Draft Timetable and Work Programme for the NI Flood Risk Management Plan (2012-2027)

Executive Meeting

21st June 2019

1.0 INTRODUCTION

NILGA, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, is the representative body for local authorities in Northern Ireland. NILGA regionally co-ordinates policy, development, training, advocacy, promotion and investment work on behalf of and with its 11 member councils, to represent the best interests of local authorities to government, business, strategic partners and the wider community.

NILGA welcomes this consultation and the opportunity to respond. Any queries in relation to this response should be forwarded to Karen Smyth at NILGA: k.smyth@nilga.org

We trust that the Association's comments are considered during the ongoing planning process for managing flood risk.

2.0 KEY ISSUES

Climate change

NILGA would take this opportunity to highlight the recently published UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) and the scenarios outlined therein, detailing potential impact of climate change in Northern Ireland, and the Climate Change Risk Assessment for Northern Ireland. We note the Department's involvement at recent briefings on UKCP18 and within the Climate Northern Ireland Steering Group, and we are keen to encourage further collaborative working to ensure Northern Ireland can adapt to the serious impacts that our citizens are likely to experience, particularly from 2030 onwards, and adequately resource that adaptation activity.

To this end we trust that Department of Infrastructure (DfI) officials will continue to work closely with the DAERA officials responsible for publishing the Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme which is due to be laid in the NI Assembly in 2019. We also trust that they will work closely

with council planning, biodiversity, community planning and emergency planning staff to ensure that we are as prepared as we can be for the future.

NILGA is particularly keen to see DfI working with council planners to ensure that affordable solutions to reduce flood risk are put in place at design stage – both hard and soft engineering solutions – as the towns and cities most at risk continue to develop. 2019 has been referred to by those within the planning field as the ‘year of the development plan’, with the work on the 11 LDPs gathering pace. It is imperative that our local plan strategies and local plan policies treat flood risk as a priority issue, and that any changes arising as a result of the 2019 risk map review are flagged up with local planning departments as a matter of urgency.

Brexit

NILGA will continue to work closely with government departments and councils on Brexit-related concerns and preparation. We are keen to ensure that any impacts of the UK’s withdrawal from Europe are well-communicated, and are particularly keen to ensure that the critically important cross-border working necessary to manage flood risk, is not negatively impacted by any change to the political relationship between the UK and Ireland.

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