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# nilgaNews

## Welcome to NILGA News!

The Local Government Association Newsletter.

*February 2025 Edition*

It has been another busy month, and we are excited to present a packed edition of NILGA News.

In this issue, we provide an update on the Local Government Awards, with winners set to be announced next month. Be sure to book your tickets now! Additionally, we have an upcoming Empowering Communities event, updates from the Partnership Panel meeting, and information from DAERA, DfE, TEO, DoJ, DoF and Co-operation Ireland.

We also include an update from the February NILGA Executive, along with insights, opportunities, and important updates for councils, officers, and councillors.

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## February NILGA Executive

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Newry, Mourne & Down District Council. Officials from the Department for Communities attended the meeting and provided updates to members regarding the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy.

Members also discussed various regional issues, including National Insurance Contributions, Rates, Funding, the Partnership Panel, the Diversity Ambassador Network, the Environmental Governance Stakeholder Reference Group, the All-Party Group on Local Government, and more.

# #LocalGovernmentAwards



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS 2025 - COUNCILS BEST IN CLASS FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

The 2025 Local Government Awards have now reached the finalist stage. The campaign has seen an incredible response, with all councils submitting entries across the ten categories, and a total of 69 entries submitted.

The overall results will be revealed at the celebration event on the 27 Mar. at the Game of Thrones Studio in Banbridge. Councils can avail of reduced-price tickets (£65 +VAT), booking forms were sent to all councils but please email [events@nilga.org](mailto:events@nilga.org) if you require any information.

[Awards Finalist Press Release](#)



Award Partners



# Empowering Communities through Social Enterprise Event

Empowering communities through social enterprise - 11th Mar. 2025, 10:30 - 12:30, Templemore Baths, Belfast.



Hear from GLL Senior Director Gareth Kirk and stakeholders from Belfast City Council, community groups and sporting bodies on the transformation of leisure services in Belfast.

**Empowering communities through social enterprise**

To register your attendance, please email your details and any special requirements to [events@nilga.org](mailto:events@nilga.org)

**Tuesday 11th March 2025  
10:30 - 12:30  
Templemore Baths, Belfast**

[More Information](#)



# Safeguarding measures for XL Bully breed type dogs



The Northern Ireland Dog Advisory Group (NIDAG) have provided an update to NILGA on the safeguarding measures introduced by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for XL Bully breed type dogs in NI. The update includes the current position across council areas and is provided for information.

[Update - NI Dog Advisory Group](#)

## Minutes from the last meeting

The last Partnership Panel meeting was held on the 18 Sept. Focusing on the theme of “Inclusive Government”, discussions included improving planning outcomes, better collaboration across government, rates support grant, prompt payments to businesses and the review of people and place. The next meeting of the Partnership Panel is scheduled for 11 Jun. 2025.



[Meeting Minutes](#)

## Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Change Fund - Eight organisations will receive a share of £1.2million as part of a Regional Change Fund initiative aimed at tackling violence against women and girls.

The funding is part of a wider £3.2 million Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Change Fund for community and voluntary sector organisations and a partnership with local councils.



[Press Release](#)

**POWER TO CHANGE**  
 Changing attitudes, behaviours & beliefs

**You have it. They have it.  
 We all have it.  
 The Power to Change.**

This is the strapline of a new campaign launched in collaboration with the Department of Justice and The Executive Office.

Men and boys across NI are being asked to check and change their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours towards women and girls.

[More Information](#)

## DfE £45m Fund - Establishment of Local Economic Partnerships at Council Level

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The news follows the publication of the Sub-Regional Economic Plan which includes the establishment of Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) in each council area to identify their specific needs and the interventions needed to aid their economic development.

[Council Allocations](#)
[Press Release](#)

## DAERA Fund - Nature Recovery Environmental Project

The DAERA has announced a fund to support Nature Recovery Environmental Projects. Councils and voluntary organisations can now apply for this new fund, the first of its kind across NI.


[Press Release](#)

## DoF Rates Consultation - Early Payment Discount & Maximum Capital Value



The Department of Finance has launched a consultation on proposals to Reduce the Early Payment Discount and elevate the Maximum Capital Value on domestic properties.

The 12 week consultation is seeking views on: reducing the Early Payment Discount from 4% to 2% and, elevating the level of the Maximum Capital Value on domestic properties from £400K to £485K.

[Dfl Consultation](#)

**Consultation closes 25 Apr.**

## DAERA Minister announces Rural Micro Capital Grants Award

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150,000 rural dwellers under his Department's Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme (RMCGS).



[Press Release](#)

## Co-operation Ireland hosts landmark All-Island Local Authority Sustainable Tourism Seminar



Center Parcs - Longford Forest

Co-operation Ireland recently held a seminar on developing sustainable tourism. At the event, industry experts from across Europe shared their experience of how local councils could develop their tourism offering in line with sustainability and environmental considerations. The seminar highlighted the critical importance of regional tourism development as a cornerstone for economic growth and environmental preservation.

**Presentations from the seminar are now available to download.**

[Presentation - Sustainable Tourism Dev. - Misa Novak](#)

[Presentation - Sustainable Tourism Dev. - Michael Nevin](#)



## Food Waste Action Week

The biggest annual food waste reduction campaign will run from **17 –23 Mar. 2025**

[More Information](#)

**Share the reality of working in local government placemaking in Northern Ireland.**

## Recruitment & Skills Survey

Public Practice wants to hear how local government skills and capacity issues in NI affect you and your team. .

**Survey closes 4 Mar.**

[Recruitment & Skills Survey](#)



GOOD INVESTMENT

## CCLA Investment Seminar

CCLA is hosting an investment seminar on the 26 Mar. at the Culloden Estate and Spa. The seminar is designed to provide insight into some of the important issues facing the sector in a practical and accessible way, relevant both to those new to investments and those with more experience.

[More Information](#)



## SONI Strategy 2025 - 2031

Northern Ireland's electricity Transmission System Operator, SONI (System Operator for Northern Ireland), has launched a new multi-year Strategy which will see the grid operator play a proactive role in supporting Northern Ireland's energy transition.

[More Information](#)

## Dates for your Diary

### NILGA Strategic Policy Network Meeting

The NILGA Strategic Policy Network provides scrutiny and leadership, democratic accountability, support and challenge in the development of regional approaches to priority issues. The next Network meeting is scheduled for 2pm on the 10 Mar. at Mossley Mill, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council. Meeting details and the agenda will be provided to members in advance.



### March NILGA Executive

The NILGA Executive meeting will take place on the 14 Mar. at 10:30 AM, with registration starting at 10 AM.

The meeting will be held at Belfast City Council. For those unable to attend in person, the meeting will also be available online, and the agenda will be provided to Executive members in advance.

## Celebration & Awards

Local Government Awards & Celebration event 27 Mar. at the Game of Thrones Studio in Banbridge. Councils can avail of reduced price tickets (£65 +vat), booking forms were sent to all councils but please email [events@nilga.org](mailto:events@nilga.org) if you require any information.



## Further details of NILGA meetings and events

## Council Updates



Press Release

### Launch of £4.4M PEACEPLUS Programme in Antrim & Newtownabbey BC

PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan, the PEACEPLUS Partnership, and Antrim and Newtownabbey BC held a breakfast event on 30 Jan. at the Theatre at The Mill. During the event, it was announced that funding of £4.4 million (€5.1m) had been secured to deliver peacebuilding projects through the PEACEPLUS Programme.

### Careers Fair Opens Doors for Local Students in Newry, Mourne & Down DC

Students from across Downpatrick, Newcastle, Castlewellan, Saintfield and Ballynahinch attended a Careers Fair on the 5 Feb. hosted by Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership, in collaboration with Ballynahinch and Lecale Area Learning Communities.

Press Release





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## Castlereagh turn business ideas into reality

The 'Go Succeed in the Community' programme of events is underway in LCCC. This free community enterprise outreach programme is aimed at supporting and encouraging individuals to start or grow a business through a series of roadshows, networking events and coffee mornings.

[Press Release](#)



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