

# Causeway Coast & Glens

## Borough Council

To: Council Meeting

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015

### Correspondence report

#### 1. Somme Tour 2015: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015 – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015

Correspondence has been received from The Somme Association giving information on the Somme Tour 2015 and inviting Council to be represented.

The estimated price is £580.00 per person.

The provisional itinerary is as follows:

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015:-** Depart Belfast City Airport for London Gatwick. Coach to Dover for ferry crossing to Calais then on to the Holiday Inn in Arras.

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015:-** Depart Hotel for full days visit into Belgium where visits will include the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division Memorial at Wytschaete, the Pool of Peace at Spanbroekmolen and Lone Tree Cemetery. Lunch at leisure in Ypres. After lunch the Tyne Cot Memorial and Cemetery and the Sanctuary Wood. The evening service at the Menin Gate.

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015:-** Depart for full day's tour in the Arras and Somme areas. Visits will include Vimy Ridge, Notre Dame de Lorette, The Ulster Memorial Tower and Thiepval Wood followed by the South African Memorial at Delville Wood and other sites in the Somme area. Lunch today is included in the price. Evening at leisure in Arras.

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015:-** Commonwealth Ceremony at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing, lunch, Northern Ireland's Ceremony at the Ulster Memorial Tower; and a service to the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division at the Memorial in Guillemont. Lunch today is included in the price. Evening at leisure in Arras.

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015:-** . Travel to Calais for ferry crossing to Dover and on to London then Belfast.

#### 2. Annual Battle of the Somme Remembrance Parade and Service Knockagh War Memorial Carrickfergus Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015

The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors have been invited to attend the Somme Remembrance Parade and Service to be held at the Knockagh War Memorial on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The Parade will form up at the Knockagh War Memorial at 10.40am, to be followed by a Service at 11.00am. Following the Service refreshments will be provided for all guests in the Marina Building, Carrickfergus Town Centre.

In order to respond to the organisers with numbers attending please contact Eithne (Tel. 7034 7010) or Stephanie (Tel. 7034 7007) in Democratic Services Unit if you wish to attend.

**3. NILGA Member Council Bulletin**

A copy of the NILGA May Bulletin is attached. The bulletin provides Council with key information on the work being taken forward through NILGA, councils and partners.

**4. Partnership Panel**

A summary of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Partnership Panel in Stormont on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015 is attached for Members' information.

This bulletin provides your Council with key information on the work being taken forward through NILGA, councils and partners, delivering results for local government. The bulletin is supplied for wide distribution including at Full Council or Council Committee meetings.

## MAKING IT ALL WORK BUT BIG CHALLENGES AHEAD: *New Councils / New NILGA*

Our new 11 councils went “live” on 1<sup>st</sup> April, and fully deserve the plaudits for the overall success of the transition. They are now settling in to their corporate cultures and roles. Councils have embraced their pivotal role as local leaders having received new, or transferred powers in key areas such as Planning, economic development and Community Planning, with Urban Regeneration powers still scheduled to be transferred next year.

NILGA too has been particularly busy, aligning fully to the 11 council structure and communicating with and to the many, many departments, agencies & partners of the Association but particularly our member Councils. We are delivering European Entrepreneurial Region events in local councils, and have been shortlisted for a major international Summit bringing 750 people to Northern Ireland in 2017! **As joint secretariat, NILGA has also supported the elected members on the Local – Central Government Partnership Panel through regular briefing and updates. A Draft Work Plan is now out to Councils for input.**

Councils have now appointed representatives to NILGA, and we will hold the first meeting of our new Executive Committee on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015. Next month will see our Annual General Meeting, to be held in Downpatrick on 5<sup>th</sup> June. Both of these meetings will confirm the new political working groups, on matters CRITICAL to COUNCILS including the Economy and Member Development.

**Our Flagship annual Conference will be held in La Mon Hotel & Country Club on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015. More details are provided later in this bulletin. *Read on to find out more essential information:***

### Legislation Update – Last Minute.Com is UNACCEPTABLE

**Key pieces of reform legislation remain to be finalised by the Assembly.** Standing Orders Regulations were initially rejected, and the Department is working urgently to address remaining issues. Vital legislation on establishing statutory partners to join councils in the Community Planning process remains outstanding, as does the Order to establish performance indicators and standards for the 2015/16 financial year. NILGA has met specifically with Minister Durkan and raised the matter formally at the Partnership Panel. It urges the Department and Assembly members to complete the legislative jigsaw, produce straightforward guidance, and to do this before the Assembly’s long summer recess.

### Financial Impact of Reform – WE MUST GET THE INVESTMENT PROMISED!

Councils have – unsurprisingly – defined areas where they are suffering from reduced funding in the post-reform era. Some of these were known before rates were struck – for instance the **swingeing cut of over £2.8m from the Rate Support Grant** provided to less wealthy council districts. It was also known that transferred funding for **maintenance of off-street car parks** was going to be inadequate, despite the poor condition of some parks and the **Executive’s pledges to ensure that functions transferring were fit for purpose, properly resourced and rates neutral at the point of transfer.**

**Other funding black holes are becoming apparent. Councils are suffering reductions in grants for waste management, clean air, emergency planning and construction products, and are seeing inadequate funding being provided to cover planning consultancy, grass cutting and grants to community and arts groups.**

And there’s more to come – proposed funding for Urban Regeneration in 2016/17 has fallen by over £12m from original estimates. NILGA ensured that Ministers and the Partnership Panel was made aware of these issues and that a Financial Impact Review is a definite part of the 2015/16 work plan.

***NILGA asserts that it is far better to anticipate rather than react to budgetary spending rounds and other financial planning constraints. At the most recent Panel meeting, local government vehemently proposed advance negotiations in regard to the NI Executive’s 2016/17 budget agreement, to avoid speculative rates forecasting and financial deficits.***

NILGA will also meet the **DSD, DARD and DFP Ministers** to discuss funding issues, and will be fully engaging with the Assembly’s Environment Committee both at the **18<sup>th</sup> June 2015 NILGA Conference** and when NILGA briefs the Committee on key issues arising during the first 100 days of reform the following week. **Reform of Councils should not penalise Councils.**

## NISMP – Key Knowledge for Community Plans

Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) provides an advisory and consultative function in relation to migration. NISMP is currently seeking to work with each council in providing the research and data that is needed at a local level to build on the opportunities and meet the challenges of demographic change. Letters have been sent to all chief executives, requesting a meeting with council to outline the work of NISMP and presentations have already been arranged for four councils. An event will be held in the autumn for all councils where council priorities in relation to migration will be examined and an activity roadmap planned. **To arrange the presentation for your council please contact Mary Kerr, NISMP, Partnership Development and Policy Officer - [m.kerr@nilga.org](mailto:m.kerr@nilga.org)**

## European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) / EU

NILGA has delivered three bespoke events dedicated to EER - Belfast (November 2014), Lisburn (February 2015) and Brussels (March 2015 - as guests of Committee of the Regions and the European Commission).

As a result of the latter input, Ms Johanna Drake, from the Commission, will be in Northern Ireland (QUB) on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015, and EER will be a component part of her recently announced visit. These three interventions are complemented by the corporate partnerships now enshrined, with events by the following partners branded as EER. Looking beyond these events, to February 2016, in advance of seeking from the Committee of the Regions a Legacy Initiative for 2016/17, it's hoped that DETI/Invest NI would engage in a collaborative flagship event with NILGA, to culminate the Award year itself and build the momentum and investment flow succeeding it. **Follow us on Twitter @NILGA\_EER2015 and Keep up to date on key EER activities and events.**

On the EU front, NILGA has developed an **EU Capacity Building Tool Kit for Elected Members: 2015-2019**. This is a **contemporary, experiential and accessible “toolkit” of local government capacity building on EU Funding** designed and coordinated by NILGA. It will be a framework support model for the EU related corporate, investment, assessment, technical, community development & decision taking roles of councillors in Northern Ireland, materially assisting them and their Councils to account for and deliver EU policies and practices which will affect Councils new powers and associated decision taking, in a corporately aligned, citizen oriented way.

Over the last three months, NILGA has met with our three Members of the European Parliament and has communicated with the Junior Ministers and the Permanent Secretaries with the aim to secure Technical Assistance for the period 2015-20 to further develop a European programme of work including capacity building for Elected members inputting in the European Programmes Monitoring Committees and seeking to access European Structural and Investment funds as well as other European funds directly through the European Commission and through our EER Partners.

## NILGA Conference – PRACTICAL. PIONEERING. REGISTER NOW!

NILGA Annual Conference and Exhibition, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015, La Mon Hotel, Castlereagh. The theme for Conference is **“Growing Local Democracy & Economies in Partnership: Northern Ireland’s Councils First 100 days”**.



With the increased services and functions delivered through the 11 councils, and substantial opportunities to grow local economies Conference will explore both the **pioneering and the practical** next steps. **Full conference details and booking forms are available on the NILGA website [www.nilga.org](http://www.nilga.org) If you would like to discuss any aspects of the conference, please contact Mark Maher, Communication and Engagement Officer at the NILGA office - [m.maher@nilga.org](mailto:m.maher@nilga.org)**



## Translink Ulster in Bloom 2015 & Britain in Bloom 2015

We are delighted to have all 11 new councils supporting the 2015 Translink Ulster in Bloom Competition, we are heading for a bumper year with over 130 council entries plus Translink Stations and Halts. The 2015 competition will be officially launched at the end of June, invitations to follow.

The Northern Ireland entries for the 2015 Britain in Bloom competition are; Scarva (Small Village), Glenarm (Village), Ahoghill (Small Town), Antrim (Large Village) and Derry City (Small City). Judging will take place in August with the results being announced at the Finalists Awards Ceremony in October. Good luck everyone.

## Calendar of Events

Meeting	Date	Venue
NILGA Office Bearer & Executive Nominations Day	12/05/15	NILGA Offices
NISMP Presentation	13/05/15	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
NILGA Inaugural Executive meeting	22/05/15	NILGA Offices
European Commissioner (Ms Johanna Drake) Visiting	04/06/15	NILGA, Queens University, (Belfast, Lisburn and other venues tbc)
NILGA AGM & Full Members Meeting	05/06/15	Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
NISMP Presentation	11/06/15	Ards and North Down Borough Council
NILGA Annual Conference 2015	18/06/15	La Mon Hotel, Castlereagh
NILGA Executive	26/06/15	TBC
Understanding Europe	26/06/15	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

### ***NILGA - Your Local Government Association***

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## **TEAM LOCAL GOVERNMENT – PARTNERSHIP PANEL**

A full team of Council and NILGA representatives attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Partnership Panel in Stormont on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

Also in attendance were Ministers Durkan (DoE, Panel Chair), Hamilton (DFP), Ford (DoJ), O'Dowd (DE) and Storey (DSD).

1. The Panel Chair highlighted the successful practical transition to 11 Councils and Panel members from local government reminded the Partnership that Councils had exercised great leadership as well as operational skill to ensure services and new powers were brought in on time.
2. Barriers to progress including administrative and legislative delays, together with severe fiscal constraints disproportionately affecting councils were strongly asserted by Council and NILGA representatives, and Minister Durkan called for engagement protocols to be set up. NILGA asserts that it is far better to anticipate rather than react to budgetary, spending rounds and other financial planning constraints.
3. Local government vehemently proposed advance negotiations in regard to the NI Executive's 2016/17 budget agreement, to avoid speculative rates forecasting and financial "black holes".
4. Panel members welcomed a key presentation on Well Being from the joint Chairs of the Carnegie Trust, Dr Aideen McGinley and Mr John Woods, with agreed outcomes being the practical and political importance of Well Being in terms of government planning and delivery of services, within the new Programme for Government, and Panel members participating in a fact finding visit to Scotland, where Well Being is an intrinsic component of two tier government and delivery of Single Outcome Agreements, cutting away silos and improving outcomes for citizens.
5. Panel members were unanimous in pressing for an early review of elements of the Code of Conduct, and welcomed the Panel Chair's confirmation that he would be facilitating further meetings to resolve areas which are unsatisfactory – it is after all Council Elected Members who have to adhere to the Code.
6. Minister Hamilton led a discussion on Shared Services, and Local Government Panel members supported the principles underlying the initiatives, including tangible savings of tens of millions of pounds in terms of new back office and technology initiatives within NI Direct, with a strong caveat that Councils, as sovereign entities, had many examples of effective and efficient practices to



deliver high quality services at affordable costs, would continue to engage with central government but, also, would practice innovative self help, in terms of regional collaboration and creative service delivery in the interests of its ratepayers and staff.

7. Local Government Panel Members and many Ministers present supported the development of the Draft Work Plan for the Partnership panel, which concentrates on critical, high level material issues such as Effective Public Service delivery, stronger local democracy, ensuring Councils have the proper resources to deliver existing and proposed new services, and ensuring local authorities have a formal, council led, role in the new Programme for Local Government. Councils will receive the draft Work Plan in early May 2015 from NILGA as Joint Secretariat, for corporate input and strategic endorsement, channelled via their Panel representative and Chief Executive.
8. MLA training initiatives undertaken by “Politics Plus” will be further explored through NILGA to support the development of elected members in local government, commencing with Partnership Panel Members engaging in a facilitated session later in 2015.
9. Local Government members voiced unanimous concern that meetings of the Panel had to be bought into by all Government departments, sought formal input into the Review of the NI Assembly, and the numbers – and roles – of new departments and requested the NI Executive to determine lead bodies for the currently fragmented rural proofing policy and consequent financial deficits.
10. Council and NILGA Panel members pressed for confirmation from the Chair that clarity would be sought / restated regarding unresolved insurance claims and associated liabilities lodged before April 2015 for transferred car parks and other capital assets.
11. The Panel resolved to have a further Panel Meeting to maintain momentum and delivery, before July 2015.

**Derek McCallan, NILGA CEO**  
**Partnership Panel Joint Secretariat**  
**29<sup>th</sup> April 2015**