



NILGA AGM September 2007

NILGA

NILGA is the Northern Ireland Local Government Association providing the representative voice of the Local Government sector. Supported by all five main political parties, NILGA and the 26 Councils throughout the whole region work together on a wide range of issues and programmes.



Groups consisting of elected members, local government staff and other partners come together to ensure that the sector is up to date with developments in Government, Environmental, European and Arts issues.

Councils in Northern Ireland play a valuable role in representing the views of local people and supporting the development of local business and community life. While they do not carry out the extensive functions of councils elsewhere in Ireland and the United Kingdom they are an important part of the political process and a useful first port of call for entrepreneurs or companies seeking to develop their businesses in Northern Ireland. For new investors in the region, councils can help companies to make good local contacts.

In addition to providing various community services, councils in Northern Ireland have increasingly helped to promote tourism, economic development, culture and the arts. And the sector is due to

experience significant reform over the next few years as part of the Review of Public Administration (RPA). Initiated by the Northern Ireland Executive the RPA is overseeing a dramatic change in the health, education and local government landscape. A smaller number of councils are likely to be formed and some powers are due to be transferred from central to local government which will enable the local council to undertake a 'place shaping' role and serve the needs of local communities and businesses more effectively.

As part of this, a new and very important power that councils will undertake is in 'community planning'. Councils will have the responsibility to bring together all the public services for a given area to concentrate on the specific local needs of a locality. In Northern Ireland there is often a concern that services designed and operated on a regional basis are not responsive enough to local concerns and needs. The Community Planning process means that all the public

service organisations must contribute to service planning and delivery.

The Council is the organisation best placed to bring together health and education service providers, infrastructure providing organisations in transport and energy and the business and community sectors to help an area prosper and develop. NILGA's role is to support councils and the local government sector through this work.

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