

COUNCILLOR GUIDE 2019



Information and resources to **support you** in your role
as a Councillor in Northern Ireland's Local Authorities



Orchestrator

Advocate

Steward
of place

Entrepreneur

Catalyst

Buffer

Sensemaker

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Congratulations and welcome to local government!

It's the Northern Ireland Local Government Association's pleasure to congratulate you on being elected as a councillor and to welcome you to the local government family.

For many of you, this will be your first time in elected office and this honour will give you a completely new perspective on how important councils are in improving the wellbeing of those in our communities.

This Guide produced by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, (NILGA), is designed to provide you with the key information you need to know as a new or

more experienced councillor and is designed to add to the support and guidance you will receive from your own council. It explores some of the main issues and challenges facing local government today and includes hints and tips from experienced councillors.

Whether you have a few hours to spare or just 10 minutes, you will find helpful information here about areas in which you may become involved.

You can find lots of further information on NILGA's website: **www.nilga.org**

*Produced with the support of the
Local Government Training Group (LGTG)*



Local Government Training Group



Belfast
City Council



Welcome to NILGA



The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), established in October 2001, is the representative and policy body for District Councils in Northern Ireland and is often known as *“the Voice of Local Government”*.

NILGA promotes, develops, champions, protects and improves the local government sector in Northern Ireland, offering policy guidance, delivering elected member learning and development, and negotiating National Pay agreements. Working with councillors and officers, NILGA represents local councils in Northern Ireland at UK national, Irish, European, Commonwealth and other international groupings.

The Association is led by all member councils and is supported by political parties at both local and central government. NILGA has formed effective corporate relationships with all relevant departments in central government, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and Senior Managers, officer networks, and other key agencies in the public, voluntary and private sectors. It has sister bodies in England (the LGA), Scotland (COSLA), Wales (WLGA) and Ireland (AILG / Regional Assemblies).

NILGA is constituted by - and accountable to - the member councils as the sector's representative body. The Association takes a proactive approach to policy development for, and with, councils in Northern Ireland, contributing to issues which include: Local Government Reform and Improvement;

Devolution, Shared Services, Waste Management; Community Planning, Local Development Planning, Economic Development; Strategic Migration, and the Programme for Government.

NILGA and the 11-member councils have a ***Programme for Local Government*** which will be reviewed in 2021. This provides a Vision for Local Government in Northern Ireland, to grow its powers, responsibilities and resources gradually over time – and to ensure local government is a strong, professional, diverse, grassroots connected and inclusive part of how Northern Ireland is governed.

NILGA's representation on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC)

The principal way in which terms and conditions of employment for employees in local government are set is through national, collective bargaining, where representatives of councils and council employees meet to negotiate those terms and conditions. Generally, collective bargaining takes place at three levels in local government: nationally, regionally and locally.

The national level covers all council employees in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - Scotland has its own arrangements. The national level of bargaining is concerned with negotiating the broad framework of conditions of service, including issues considered to be core, minimum conditions. The regional level of bargaining consists of eleven regions (nine in England plus one each in Wales and Northern Ireland). This tier is concerned with the application of the national conditions within each region, together with the negotiation of any region-specific matters. The regional bodies are also charged with advising on

the interpretation of national and regional agreements and can assist with the resolution of any disputes between a council and its employees within the region. All other matters are for local determination between individual councils and their employees. Most employees within councils (around 95%) fall under the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, known in local government as the 'Green Book', which sets out the conditions of service negotiated by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (the 'NJC').

Workforce and Development

As above mentioned, NILGA is a registered Employers' Association. In that role, NILGA represents district councils in Northern Ireland, as employers, in discussions nationally and interacts with trade unions recognised as representing employees in local government.

As an Employers' Association, it also has representation on the *National Association of Regional Employers (NARE)* which provides a direct access to both member and officer learning, from across 13 regions, and enables best practice, free and low-cost training, learning tools and similar advantages to be tailored for each and every council in Northern Ireland. NILGA is a registered and licensed "Charter" provider, namely the nationally accredited Award for Councils committed to member development, an initiative which at its fullest level requires assessment and endorsement from the community which you and your Council serves.

NILGA retains a strong link and input into the *Local Government Training Group*, which is an all council grouping resourced to provide workforce and member training / learning / development in a regionally co-ordinated manner for the 11 councils.



Your Induction Toolkit

Use this Induction toolkit to help you prepare for your role as an elected member.

INDUCTION CHECKLIST

Tick off the tasks below as you do them.
Record information relevant to your Council and useful documents to refer back to using the note paper at the back of this guide.

SIGNING UP

I have:

- ☐ Signed my acceptance of office
- ☐ Completed the Council's Declaration of Interests form
- ☐ Received a copy of the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors
- ☐ Informed the Council of any additional needs with which they can assist me in my role

FIRST THINGS FIRST

I have been supplied with:

- ☐ A security pass and a Council diary
- ☐ A mobile phone, tablet and / or laptop
- ☐ The opening hours of the main Council Offices and Service Depots
- ☐ A guided tour of the main Council building and facilities, including Council chambers
- ☐ A map outlining the layout of the main Council Offices, buildings and car parks

SETTLING IN

I can find the following:

- ☐ Chief Executive's Office

- ☐ Members' Room
- ☐ Members' Services Department
- ☐ Pigeonholes for councillors' post
- ☐ Office equipment for members' use (photocopiers, phones, computers, printers)
- ☐ Library or reference area, including copies of local and national newspapers
- ☐ Refreshment/ canteen area
- ☐ Fire exits

BASIC INFORMATION

I have had:

- ☐ A meet and greet with senior Council staff including the Chief Executive, Heads of Departments and other key officers

I have access to:

- ☐ An organisational chart of the Council's internal management
- ☐ A list of other Council members, their DEAs and political affiliation
- ☐ Key Council strategy documents including the Corporate Plan, Best Value Strategy, Equality and Emergency Plans, Annual Report, etc.
- ☐ Documents such as statistics about and key issues in my Council area
- ☐ A schedule of full Council meetings, committee meetings and sub committee meetings
- ☐ The Council's Member Allowance scheme and claim forms

Claim forms should be submitted to:

The date that claims forms should be submitted by is:

I am a member of the following Council committees or panels:

I have been appointed to represent the Council on the following outside bodies:

COUNCIL PROVISIONS FOR MEMBERS

I have investigated that my Council can provide me with:

- ☐ A Council email address and business cards
- ☐ A computer and mobile phone to carry out Council business outside Council hours
- ☐ An official photograph
- ☐ A press-cutting service, if available
- ☐ Administrative support and ongoing IT training
- ☐ A role profile/Code of Conduct for elected members
- ☐ A 'buddying' or mentoring scheme for new members or offer of a political mentor
- ☐ A list of training and development available to members, including that of NILGA
- ☐ Find out how Council takes decisions and learn how you can influence them
- ☐ Initially concentrate on areas that you have an interest in and become knowledgeable in them
- ☐ Take advantage of formal training offered by your Council
- ☐ Keep a copy of the ***Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors*** to hand and be aware of its content
- ☐ Organise yourself and your diary; learn how to prioritise your workload and plan ahead
- ☐ Keep in touch with your electorate, fellow councillors and key officers
- ☐ Read your correspondence, e-mails and action issues that are a priority using common sense and advice – ask questions if you are not sure
- ☐ Finally, do not take on too much too quickly

TOP TIPS FOR COUNCILLORS

- ☐ Learn how your Council works and the services it provides

1. Stay on top of your emails – constituents are impressed by a concise and informed reply, once a backlog has built up, you'll have to plan and prioritise responses. Make sure you have an electronic / manual filing system to keep dynamic records of replies, officers' responses, etc.
2. Study party manifestoes – you'll be challenged on what you're doing to deliver, whatever party, if any, you represent; it's your job to do the challenging and negotiating. And check out the council's Corporate Plan – it will give you a firm idea of what the priorities of the authority are over the next few years.
3. Understand who runs your council – you may have a 'strong leader', or a responsive, visible, chief executive, you may hear your council being described as 'officer-led' or 'member-led': you need to know where the power is. Have a chat with the officers you are most likely to be dealing with. Getting an understanding of who they are will be really useful over the next few years.
4. Build good relations – and try to resolve disputes quickly – with your neighbouring councillors. Whatever your politics, you are likely to be working together across party divides over the next four years to help fix local residents' problems.
5. Make sure you've got a good photo on the council website, with your contact details. Include information on your surgeries – even if citizens rarely attend, try not to skip these open public meetings, as it could be during the one you fail to attend that someone in need turns to you for advice. You might consider holding mobile surgeries – let people know in advance that you will be knocking and people are more likely to answer the door!
6. Find out about your council committees. You will need to figure out which ones meet in the day time and which ones go on well into the night – a lot of your choice will be based on when you are available. Plan your diary.
7. Think about how you're going to be kept informed about, respond and adapt to new policies and emerging good practice – your

council's Policy Officer and NILGA are two essential sources of information.

8. Go for a coffee with your local journalists – it's important to build a robust relationship if you can, before they have some reason to chase you. Also have a look at local on-line forums – these can be a great place to find out what the issues are, and many councillors frequently contribute.

A twitter account can be a valuable tool for engaging with your constituents. There are many useful resources that can help you make the best of this tool and ensure it is used in an appropriate manner.

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-local-government-code-conduct-councillors>

http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/elected_members/follow-me-guide-to-social-media-for-elected-members.pdf

9. Make sure you know your council's procedures in terms of recording Members' Interests and declaring any entertainment or gifts you benefit from – they're easy to keep up to date, but also easy to get caught out on if you forget. And remember that while the ethics and standards regime can seem constraining, being caught out for not declaring a pecuniary interest is a criminal offence.
10. Know your council's constitution and standing orders – the rules for debates, for asking formal questions, for inviting deputations or making notices of motion. Better still, get someone to guide you through scenarios and earmark sections for referral pre meeting.
11. Make sure you're getting daily briefs, diary updates, and council / policy news. Look out for NILGA emails and Policy & Learning events. At events, you'll meet and learn from others and be informed by what other councils are doing across NI.
12. Explain your new role to your friends and relations, ask for their sympathy, and 'cancel the rest of your life!' Be sure to find time to relax and switch off.



Planning – a vital tool for Councils and Councillors

Planning is a valuable tool for Councils and Councillors to shape their communities and places. It carries real responsibility for delivering for the whole community for today and the future.

What is Planning?

Planning is about getting the right things built in the right places, about the spaces around buildings, how we move around and protecting our precious places and resources. Making these decisions is what makes a Councillor's job challenging, exciting and rewarding.

Planning takes account of long-term issues in the interests of the public. These include the environment, economic growth and prosperity, a cohesive and empowered society, good health and well-being, heritage and local culture.

Plan Making

In Northern Ireland we have a plan-led system. This means that the Local Development Plan (LDP) directs development in a council area. These are written and implemented by the council, consulting with the community, interest groups, businesses and landowners.

It's the plan which sets out the council's vision and outlines the policies against which proposals will be assessed. For you to influence the future of the area the LDP is an important place to start.

It is also important to look beyond your boundaries. People move across them daily for business, pleasure and learning. Working with your neighbouring councils will help you to meet their needs and get the best solution for your community.

Day to day Planning

Most people's experience of planning is through proposals to build or change a building – planning applications. Development management is a positive process for councils and can promote the land use changes that are needed for the local economy and the wider public interest. It doesn't mean that Councillors always have to say 'yes', but it is appropriate to advise applicants make changes to meet the vision and need identified in your plan. If a development isn't acceptable for sound planning reasons, Councillors can say 'no'.

Help is available for Councillors

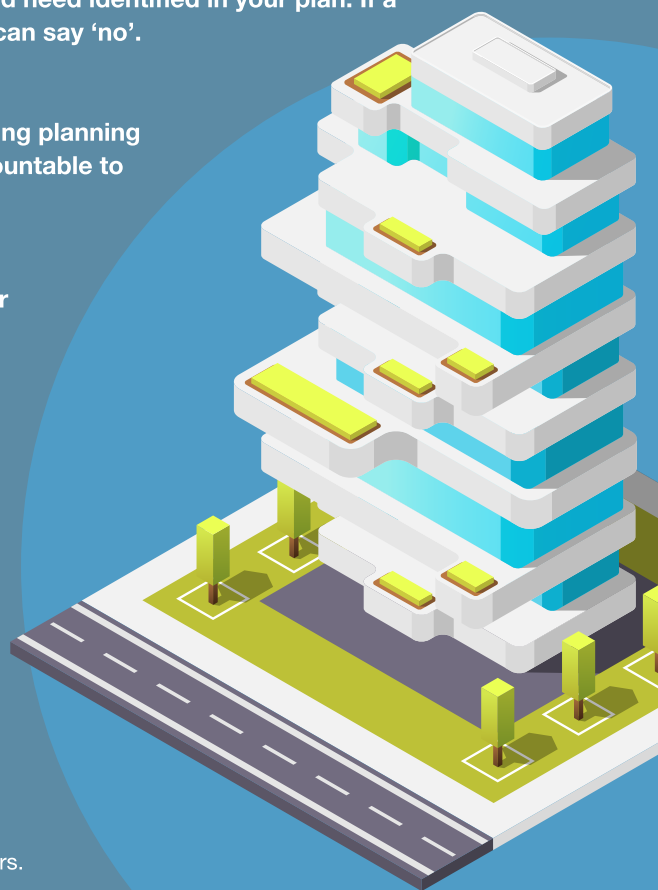
It is important to follow your council's code of conduct; your role in taking planning decisions has to be transparent; your decisions and behaviour are accountable to the public, you must be able to explain the basis of your decisions.

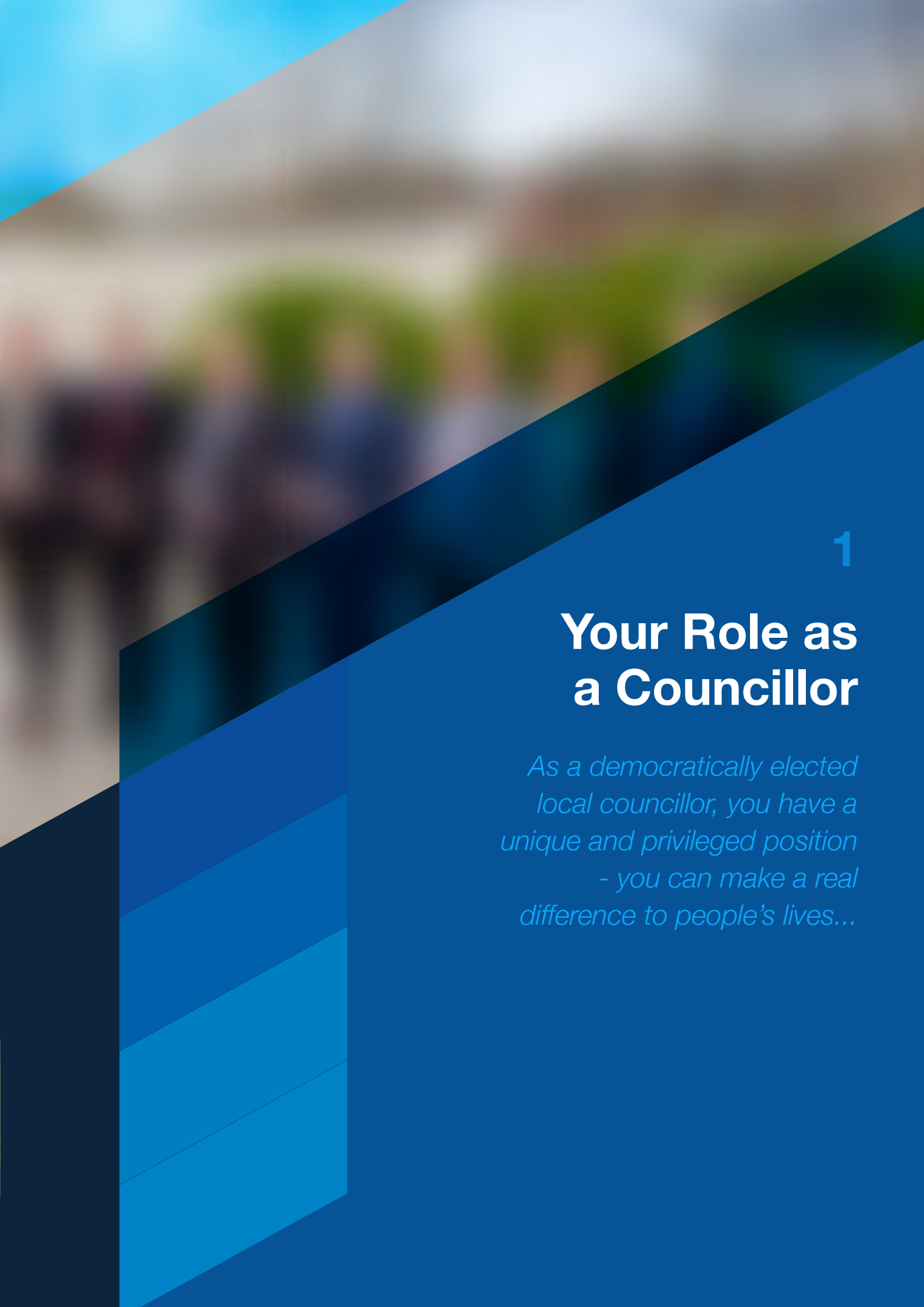
Almost all planners are a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), as the professional body for town and country planners, whether they work in the public or private sectors. Your officers are able to provide you with valuable advice when taking decisions.

The RTPI encourages you to take up every opportunity for training and briefing on planning; your Council and NILGA will provide some. The RTPI also holds a number of conferences and events in Northern Ireland and elsewhere during the year, which you can attend.

Planning is an important and rewarding function and one which will help you fulfil your aims of being a Councillor – delivering for your community's future.

www.rtpi.org.uk/northernireland





1

Your Role as a Councillor

*As a democratically elected
local councillor, you have a
unique and privileged position
- you can make a real
difference to people's lives...*

The Councillor's Role

Part 1 (a)

The Councillor's Role

As a democratically elected local councillor, you have a unique and privileged position – you can make a real difference to people's lives by focusing on improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

However, being a councillor is hard work. Every day you will be expected to play a part in planning, organising, monitoring and developing council business and, in doing so, directing and balancing the needs of your local area, your residents and voters, community groups, local businesses, your political party (if you belong to one) and the council. Collectively within each council, the councillors decide what is in the public interest amidst a range of conflicting issues and views.

A councillor's role is varied and requires an individual assessment of the ways you wish to undertake your work. As the locally elected representative, you will engage with residents and groups on a wide range of different issues and take on an important community leadership role. In council you will contribute to the development of policies and strategies, including budget setting and you may be involved in scrutinising or taking decisions on planning or licensing applications.

Representation

A councillor's primary role is to represent their ward and the people who live in it. Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the council. As well as being an advocate for your local residents and signposting them to the right people at the council, you will need to keep them informed about the issues that affect them.

In order to understand and represent local views and priorities, you need to build strong relationships and encourage local people to make their views known and engage with you and the council. Good communication and engagement are central to being an effective councillor.

As a local councillor, your residents will expect you to:

- *Respond to their queries and investigate their concerns (casework)*
- *Communicate council decisions that affect them*
- *Know your patch and be aware of any problems*
- *Know and work with representatives of local organisations, interest groups and businesses*
- *Represent their views at council meetings*
- *Lead local campaigns on their behalf.*

Community Leadership

Community leadership is at the heart of modern local government. Councils work in partnership with local communities (geography / place, identity and interest) and organisations – including public, voluntary, community and private sectors – to develop a vision for their local area, working collaboratively to improve services and quality of life for citizens. Councillors, having been democratically elected to present the interests of people, are uniquely placed to shape current thinking on public services and consider ways to enhance people's wellbeing. Your role in being a strong community leader also requires you to be approachable to citizens, ensuring they feel involved in decision-making, building trust with them, and building trust between citizens and with their council.

Developing Council Policy / Corporate Management

Councils need clear strategies and policies to enable them to achieve their vision for the area, make best use of resources and deliver services that meet the needs of local communities. As a councillor, you will contribute to the development of these policies and strategies, bringing the views and priorities of your local area to the debate (emphasising the need for regular and robust engagement with citizens). The committees and forums you are appointed to may vary slightly in how policies and strategies are developed. However, the council's policy framework must be signed off by full council, on which every councillor sits.

As a councillor you will be expected to:

- *Participate in the collective policymaking, governance and management of the council;*
- *Help decide service priorities, agreeing and setting budgets and determining which rate is to be struck;*
- *Initiate debate on issues related to the Council's functions;*
- *Monitor and challenging the council's performance against targets in all aspects of Council activity; and*

Ensure that council decisions are implemented and carried out fairly.

Finding Solutions

Councillors play a key role in working with others to solve problems, by assessing available evidence and data to arrive at positive solutions. This requires you to:

- *Be available for constituents to raise enquiries and issues of importance, taking-action fairly and without prejudice;*
- *Develop a working knowledge of the organisations, services, activities etc, important to the community's well-being and identity; and*
- *Undertake casework such as representing an individual or family at special appeals.*

Other Duties

- *Attending meetings – the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 lays down in law that failure to attend council or committee meetings for a period of 6 months, unless your reason has been approved by the council, will lead to the discontinuation of you being a member;*
- *Acting reasonable; and*
- *Following the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct.*

*There are currently **462 Councillors** across the **11 Councils** representing each of the **462 wards** and Northern Ireland is divided into **80 District Electoral Areas** which are amalgams of 5, 6, or 7 wards, and are used for the election of councillors in Proportional Representation elections.*

Councillor Viewpoint

Councillor Gerardine Mulvenna
(Mid & East Antrim Borough Council)

My advice for new councillors is:

- *Seek out learning and development opportunities and go to as much as you can in the first six months as you will need all the guidance you can get.*
- *Get to know your council officers as these relationships are very important and will help you to be more effective in the role and on a wider note treat everyone with dignity and respect.*
- *Prepare yourself for it being often a 24/7 commitment. Achieving a work-life balance can be difficult. Therefore, try not to make promises you cannot keep.*

Planning and Regulation

Councils are not just service providers, they also act as regulators. As a councillor you may be appointed to sit on the planning and regulatory committees, considering issues such as planning applications, licenses for pubs and restaurants and ensuring that businesses comply with the law. In these roles, councillors are required to act independently and are not subject to the group / party whip. Learning and development Programmes focussed on planning and regulation will be made available to members through councils and NILGA.

Code of Conduct and Standards

At the time of writing, the Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors is current and up-to-date.

The NI Code of Conduct for Councillors sets out the Principles and Rules of conduct which Councillors must adhere to. As an Elected

Member it is your personal responsibility to ensure that you are familiar with, and understand, your obligations under the Code, and that you behave in a way that ensures those obligations are met.

The Principles are intended to uphold the highest possible standards of behaviour for councillors. The Rules are the practical application of the Principles. Elected Members are expected to adhere to both.

The 12 Principles include:

- *Public Duty*
- *Selflessness*
- *Integrity*
- *Objectivity*
- *Accountability*
- *Openness*
- *Honesty*
- *Leadership*
- *Equality*
- *Promoting Good Relations*
- *Respect*
- *Good Working Relationships*

The Rules relate to your:

- *Obligations as a Councillor*
- *Behaviour towards other people*
- *Disclosure of information*
- *Use of position*
- *Use of council resources*
- *Expenses and allowances*
- *Acceptance and registration of gifts and hospitality*
- *Planning matters (Summary of Planning Do's & Don'ts)*

The Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman have produced Guidance for Councillors from the NI Local Government Commissioner of Standards to help with the ethical standards framework of the Code.

New Councillors:

As this legislation imposes serious obligations and failure to comply with the law could lead to criminal proceedings, it would be advisable for new councillors to review the provisions in full.

The Local Government Commissioner for Standards



The Commissioner for Standards has been given the authority to investigate and adjudicate on complaints that councillors have, or may have, failed to comply with the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.

The Commissioner has delegated the authority to investigate alleged breaches of the Code to the Deputy Commissioner and the Local Government Ethical Standards (LGES) Directorate.

The LGES Directorate's role is to receive, assess and investigate complaints. If an investigation is undertaken, the Directorate will take account of all the facts and evidence available to it, including what the councillor and the complainant have to say.

If, having completed the investigation, the Directorate decides that there may have been a breach of the Code, the Deputy Commissioner will ask the Commissioner to adjudicate.

At a hearing which is usually held in public, the Commissioner will decide whether there

has been a breach. If so, she will then decide what sanction should be imposed.

Further information on how complaints are assessed, investigated and adjudicated on can be found here. A Factsheet on what is expected of councillors during the investigation process, and information on the Commissioner's service standards, can be found here.

Understanding the Code of Conduct

The Commissioner is committed to improving learning and understanding of the Code of Conduct through the production of guidance and other initiatives.

In 2017 a detailed Guide to the Code was issued by the Commissioner. To help demonstrate how the Code might apply in practice, examples of cases are used throughout the Guide.

In 2018 a Guide for Councillors on the Use of Social Media was produced. This is intended to help councillors identify the potential risks to compliance with the Code and to assist in using social media ethically, legally and safely.

The Adjudication Hearings section of the Commissioner's website lists the hearings which have been held so far. The detailed Decision Notices in each case summarise the investigation and explain the reasons for the Commissioner's findings. They provide important learning points for councillors.

To help councillors further understand the investigation process and the roles of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, staff from the Local Government Ethical Standards Directorate will be providing a number of information sessions during 2019.

Councillors are encouraged to attend these sessions, and indeed any other training which may be offered on the Code.

Defamation and privilege

Councillors can be sued for defamation if they say or write anything that will 'lower a person in the estimation of right-thinking people'. However, in council meetings they have a qualified privilege to allow freedom of speech. This can protect you against being sued for something you say as part of your duty as a councillor or to defend or support the interests of the council – but it only applies if you can show that you honestly believed what you said and were not motivated by malice.

Freedom of Information

As a councillor, the decisions you make and the actions you take are all subject to public scrutiny. Your allowance, along with any expenses that you claim, will be published on the council's website. **The Freedom of Information Act 2000** gives people rights of access to the information held by councils and other public bodies. The legislation aims to give people a better understanding of how organisations make decisions, carry out their duties and spend public money. For further information on FOI see <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/>

Environmental Information

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 provide public access to environmental information held by councils and other public authorities.

The Regulations do this in two ways:

- *public authorities must make environmental information available proactively;*
- *members of the public are entitled to request environmental information from public authorities.*

The Regulations apply only to the environmental information held by public authorities. The Freedom of Information Act gives people access to most other types of information held by public authorities.

Usually, it will be obvious when requested information is environmental – for example, information about land development, pollution levels, energy production, and waste management – but more information on these regulations and their application is available on the ICO website <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/what-are-the-eir/o>

Data Protection and the Role of the Councillor

Councillors are likely to have three different roles in relation to data protection:

- *As a member of the council, for example, as a member of a committee.*
- *As a representative of residents in their ward, for example in dealing with complaints.*
- *They may represent a political party, particularly at election time.*

Use of and Protecting Personal Information

Elected representatives have data protection responsibilities for the personal information they process in their work. They are data controllers under the GDPR. This means they are responsible for making sure all personal data handled by their office is done in a way that complies with the requirements of the GDPR.

For more information about the GDPR, including advice to help data controllers comply please see the *ICO's Guide to GDPR*.

When councillors consider using personal information, they should consider the context in which that information was collected to decide whether their use of the information will be lawful, fair and transparent, as required by principle (a) of the General Data Protection Regulations:

Where a councillor is representing an individual resident, who has made a complaint, the councillor will usually have the implied consent of the resident to retain relevant personal data provided and to disclose it as appropriate. The resident will also expect that the organisations (including the local authority) who are the subject of the complaint will disclose personal data to the councillor.

If there is any uncertainty regarding the resident's wishes, it would be appropriate to make direct contact with the resident to confirm the position – particularly if there is a need to go beyond the expectation of the constituent in use of their information.

It is vital that a councillor is always clear with constituents about what will happen with their information. The ICO has a *Privacy Notice Template* that councillors may use.

There is also useful *Consent Guidance* available from the ICO website.

Special Category Data

Under GDPR, councillors will need to satisfy additional conditions in order to process special category (sensitive) or criminal conviction data. In order to process special category data they must satisfy a lawful basis under Article 6 and one of the conditions for processing special category data under Articles 9 and 10. You can get more information about all the *lawful bases in the ICO Guide to the GDPR* and via their *interactive lawful basis tool*.

Paying the data protection fee

On 1 April 2019, the rules around paying the data protection fee changed. Members of the House of Lords, elected representatives and prospective representatives are exempt from paying a fee, unless they process personal data for purposes other than the exercise of their functions as a Member of the House of Lords, an elected representative or as a prospective representative. For more information, updated *Guidance on the Data Protection Fee* is available from the ICO website.

Political Campaigning

Political parties, campaigners and candidates campaign using a variety of communication methods to engage with voters. Where such campaigning involves the processing of personal data (including electoral register information) it must be carried out in compliance with the GDPR. Contacting an individual by post, email, text or similar message, voicemail, fax, phone or automated phone to promote a political view, or otherwise influence an individual, is 'direct marketing' and this is also regulated by GDPR and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations. The ICO has produced *guidance* on how to comply, and assistance may also be available through your political party.

Offences

Data Protection legislation contains a number of criminal offences, including:

Making unauthorised disclosures of personal information.

For example, a councillor who discloses personal information held by the council to their party for electioneering purposes without the council's consent could commit an offence.

Procuring unauthorised disclosures of personal information

For example, a councillor who obtains a copy of personal information apparently for council purposes, but in reality, for their own personal use (or the use of their party), is likely to have committed an offence.

Security

Councillors should be aware that they need to arrange for appropriate security to protect personal information. They must consider the nature of the information and the harm that can result. They should consider what technical and organisational measures, such as use of passwords, computer access privileges, procedures and staff training, are appropriate to keep information safe.

Councils and political parties should also take appropriate measures in the same way.

More information

More detailed advice on use of information and the rules surrounding it, is available from the Information Commissioner's Office at **www.ico.org** and members should be aware that this note is only a summary version of the key points for elected representatives.

Councillor Viewpoint

Councillor Cara McShane,
(Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council)

I have been a Councillor since 2005, representing the people of Ballycastle, The Glens, Rathlin Island and Ballintoy. Elected at the age of 23, I became the youngest ever Councillor elected to Moyle District Council, having the honour of being Chair of the Council on two separate occasions.

Following the Review of Public Administration, I was elected onto the new Causeway Coast and Glens Council in 2014, chairing the Council's Audit Committee for two years and currently Vice-Chair of Leisure and Development.

I have been involved in politics since a young age, joining Sinn Féin at 16 and working in the Assembly as our Party's Administrator for several years, before returning to university to complete a Masters in Human Rights Law.

My day-to-day activities involve attending Council meetings; scheduling public and private engagements with multiple stakeholders; visiting individuals and community groups to discuss and advocate on a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues; as well as communicating messages effectively to the public using various methods including print media; radio and social media platforms.

The role of a Councillor is varied, however, my advice for new Councillors would be:

- *Every day is a learning day – don't be afraid to ask questions!*
- *An elected representative is both a rewarding and a privileged*

experience, however, don't lose sight of the people who gave you the power to speak on their behalf and to make a difference to the quality of people's lives

We all have unique life experiences – your contribution to decision-making is valued and is important in an increasingly diverse society.

Part 1 (b)

Support for Councillors

Councils provide support to councillors in their role as democratically elected representatives, although the level and type of support provided will vary. It can include:

1. *Induction and training*
2. *Access to space in the council headquarters, such as members' room*
3. *Office equipment such as a mobile phone, computer and printer*
4. *Access to media and general communications advice*
5. *Research support.*

Some support is provided for all councillors; other support is provided via the political groups (or if you are an independent councillor, your council may have an independent group office). The Lord Mayor, Mayor or Chair of the council is more likely to have dedicated support.

Induction

Most councils offer induction sessions for new councillors to familiarise them with their new role and how the council works. Your induction should introduce you to the members and officers you need to know to

do your job effectively and show you how and where to access the information you will need. It should also run through the legal framework you will be operating within.

Councils also provide a range of learning and development programmes for councillors. This may build your knowledge in particular service areas (such as planning, leisure or waste and recycling). Also, learning and development will also be available in other practical based core skills such as: public speaking, effective scrutiny and chairing skills.

NILGA also is well placed to materially contribute to council induction programmes and will work with officer teams to co-ordinate.

Accessing Information

Most of the information you need to be effective in your new role as a councillor will be available online. Your council's website and intranet will contain lots of information about the council, the way it works, its services and the local area.

Council papers should be provided electronically and on occasions in paper form.

Officers have a duty to ensure that councillors have access to the information they need in order to make well-informed decisions. They may do this by producing factual reports, making presentations or arranging visits – for example taking members of the planning committee to visit a site that is subject to a planning application.

Allowances

There are five types of allowances paid to councillors in Northern Ireland, the maximum allowances are determined by the Department for Communities (DfC) Local Government Division, full details available on the

DfC CONSOLIDATED COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES CIRCULAR – UPDATED February 2019

Future circulars relating to councillor allowances will be made available on the Local Government Circulars section of the Department for Communities (DfC) website.

1. *Basic Allowance Maximum*
£15,071 as of 1st April 2019
2. *Dependants' Carers' Allowances*
3. *Travel Allowances*
4. *Special Responsibility Allowance*
5. *Subsistence Allowances*

All councillors are entitled to a basic allowance. Those with additional roles may also receive a special responsibility allowance (SRA) which reflects the level of responsibility and expected time commitment, along with travel and subsistence. Allowances are subject to income tax and it is your responsibility to ensure that you pay the correct amount.

Pensions - The Local Government Pensions Scheme (NI) for Councillors

The main purpose of the scheme is to provide a pension in retirement for councillors. New councillors will be automatically brought into the Scheme, but can opt out. The benefits built up and paid under the scheme are based on the length of your membership and your career average pensionable pay. The pensionable pay for a councillor consists of Basic Responsibility Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance payments only.

Further details are available from NILGOSC

Time off work

Many councillors hold down jobs in addition to the work they carry out as a councillor. To support these people in carrying out public duties there is specific statutory provision entitling employees who hold certain public positions to reasonable time off to perform the duties associated with them and this applies to councillors.

The duties are:

- *Attendance at meetings of Council or any of its committees or subcommittees; or*
- *Performance of duties approved by the Council for the purpose of discharging its functions or those of any its committees or subcommittees.*

The amount of time off work concerned is not specified in legislation other than it being 'reasonable'.

In determining what is reasonable regard would be given to:

- *How much time is required for the performance of council duties;*
- *How much time he or she has already been allowed off for council duties or other duties such as trade union work etc; and*
- *The circumstances of his or her employer's business and the effect which his or her absence may have on it.*

There is no requirement on an employer to pay an employee for the time off they have had to perform public duties. For further information please access the following web page:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/time-public-duties

Communication

An essential part of being an effective councillor is knowing how and what to communicate

with different audiences. The following broad principles can help you.

Listen as well as promote.

As an elected representative it is important to let local people know what you have been doing, but it's equally important to listen to people and groups in your area, such as:

- *local residents*
- *fellow councillors and officers*
- *other elected representatives*
- *your political party or group*
- *local organisations (businesses, voluntary and community sector, partners, etc)*
- *the media*
- *community and religious leaders.*

Make the most of available help:

The council will have a communications team whose job is to represent the council from a corporate point of view, reflecting the policy decisions made.

Find out what methods of communication are available to you and who their audience is (for example council and party websites, newsletters and magazines, e-newsletter, social media channels and events

on NILGA and the NILGA Executive. During 2017-2018 I was Deputy Chair of Mid Ulster Council.

Outside of Council I am a Board of Governor for Cookstown Nursery School and Newmills Primary School. Active in my local area in the Loyal Orders and taking part in local history group talks and local community groups.

Daily I am on the ground locally lobbying for more investment on roads, better infrastructure, better broadband for rural areas and much need water mains upgrades in the rural areas.

My aim from the day I was elected was to be ready to help those needing help and to deliver for the area.

Meeting People

Over the last 10-15 years, there has been a dramatic shift in how people get their information and how communities come together on different issues. Where previously a story in the local media might have been the way to get greatest awareness (and still might be), depending on the audience you are speaking to, you might find that a Facebook group, Twitter campaign, Instagram feed, LinkedIn page or organising a local forum will be more effective. You need to think about your audience, who you are trying to reach, then use the appropriate channels to reach your intended audience.

There are several ways of engaging with your audience locally. You can:

- *visit local meeting places – cafes and shops*
- *write newsletters (paper and/or email)*
- *run events or meetings*
- *hold surgeries, either in person or online, providing opportunities for local people to ask questions or raise concerns*

Councillor Viewpoint

Councillor Mark Glasgow (Mid Ulster District Council)

When elected to Mid Ulster District Council I was 24 years of age. During my term on council I have been a member of the planning committee and environment committee, currently holding the vice chair position on the planning committee.

I have been a member of the PCSP, Shop Mobility and Cookstown Town Centre Forum. Also being the Mid Ulster Rep for the UUP

- *use social media (make sure your content is accurate, informative, balanced and objective) – if in any doubt then check your council's social media policy*

Using Social Media

Councillors, officers and the council itself will use social media in distinct ways. However, there is a set of universal principles that are useful to keep in mind.

- *Be strategic – plan ahead: who do you want to engage with, why and how? What do you want to achieve?*
- *Be human: be approachable in your language and tone; behave online as you would in person.*
- *Be engaging: respond to questions and join in when you can move the conversation on or help.*
- *Be professional: remember that you represent your council and your party, so be aware of how your public voice comes across.*
- *Share and attribute: you can share what others have posted but it is polite to acknowledge and attribute where this has come from.*
- *Go to where your audience is: if the people you want to connect with are on a particular platform, forum or group, join it.*
- *Content is key: by creating sharable and engaging content you can contribute to the conversation and be heard.*
- *Be authentic: don't pretend to be something you are not.*
- *The internet is forever: remember that what you post now could be found in years to come.*

Develop a positive relationship with the local media

Local journalists are always looking for good stories. By building and maintaining a positive

relationship with reporters in your area, you can establish yourself as a valuable and credible contact for news and comment.

Journalists you have built up trust with will often call you looking for tipoffs. Think about the stories you can offer – even if they are not necessarily council-related. If you have a story of interest, don't assume that issuing a press release will automatically do the job. Get to know the local media's deadlines and give reporters as much notice as possible.

Present Story

The best news stories are those that tell the TRUTH: Topical, Relevant, Unusual, Trouble or Human. Remember that your greatest strength with the media is as a community leader. A local reporter may not be interested in a political press release, but they will take notice if you are campaigning on behalf of your residents on high profile local issues.

Know your residents' concerns, understand their ambitions and be their champions. Work with community groups – often they will be involved in campaigns of interest to the media that can help boost your profile. And think pictures: if a story has an obvious visual angle involving local people, it is far more likely to be covered.

Better use of data and evidence in local government

Data and evidence are increasingly being recognised as important in the design and transformation of local public services. It can be used to deliver outcomes and drive efficiencies, which is particularly valuable within current financial constraints. NILGA, as Part of the Regional Programme for Elected Member Development, will deliver a workshop each year to help councillors and councils get a better understanding of data and evidence-based policy making, why they are important, how to use data and evidence, and what support is available.

The NINIS website can provide you with a statistical snapshot of your area (area profile) simply by entering a postcode. You can access a range of interactive content and visualisations tools including population pyramids, infographics and maps which allow you to interpret the statistics in a spatial context.

How can this benefit you

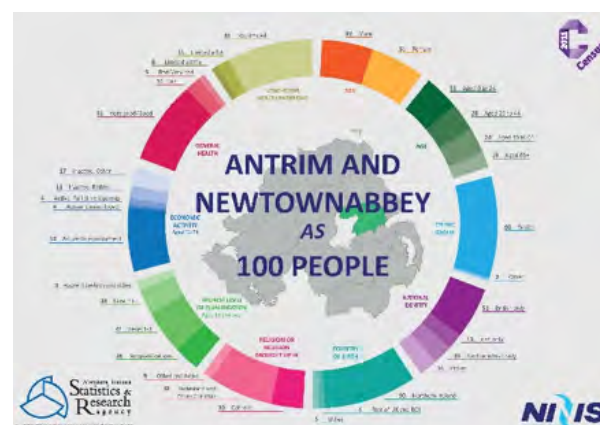
By allowing you to:

- find key population, education, health & economic stats for your local area
- develop, monitor and evaluate policies
- make policy decisions based on evidence
- find population level equality statistics
- access a quality assured data
- undertake spatial research and analysis
- access infographics and interactive content by each Local Council (LGD2014)

Is training available?

Yes, NINIS provides training workshops for participants to familiarise themselves with the functionality and range of data on the website.

www.nisra.gov.uk/ninis



Part 1 (c)

Personal Development

The role of a local elected representative is multi-faceted and involves using a unique set of skills.

What it means to be a councillor has changed dramatically and continues to do so in response to the uncertain political and economic context within which they are now operating. Other contextual challenges impacting on the role include the increasing remit, scrutiny and accountability of the councillor, changing citizen expectations, Brexit, devolution, new technologies and the continued transformation and localisation of public services.

The appropriate skill set for elected members has markedly shifted. Supporting elected members to equip themselves in this ever-changing role and challenging context is an investment with a high return.

Therefore, programmes of learning and development linked to the skills sets required for the various roles councillors now undertake

have never been more critical to the delivery of services, the collaborative role the councillor engages in with the community, the role they play distinct from officers and from MLAs together with the underpinning reputation of the local government sector as a whole. Great councillors contribute to great councils and vice versa.

Key Competencies

The key competencies which are desirable for elected members to possess are:

- Local leadership and representation
- Partnership working
- Political Understanding
- Scrutiny and Challenge
- Effective Communication.

Local Leadership – refers to the need for councillors to engage with members of their community in order to learn about issues of local concern and help to facilitate a vision for the locality. It involves encouraging trust and respect between individuals and groups by mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and sections of the community.



Bronte Homeland, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Partnership working – This aspect of the councillor role focusses on the need to build good relationships with others (i.e. colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations) by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. It recognises the need for councillors to appreciate and value different contributions, delegate or provide support as required, and to take a long-term view in developing partnerships.

Political understanding – This skill requires the need for councillors to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision, and encourage democratic processes and public engagement. It recognises that councillors need to work across group boundaries at times, yet still be able to maintain their own political integrity.

Scrutiny and challenge – Scrutiny and challenge is an important day-to-day aspect of the councillor role. Councillors need to act as a ‘critical friend’ by identifying opportunities for scrutiny inside and outside the council, and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others. To be effective in this role, councillors need to analyse information quickly and present arguments that are concise, meaningful and easily understood.

Effective Communication – This skill area recognises the need for councillors to demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language with different groups. Councillors must also communicate regularly and effectively with all parts of their community using different forms of media.

Resilience and Wellbeing - For all of us, life can sometimes demand courage and present challenges when faced with difficult decisions and changing circumstances.

Elected Members carry additional demands as they play a critical leadership role in leading others through testing and changing times.

Increasingly councils are having to make difficult decisions about which services it provides to communities, against a background of changing priorities, as well as the search for new and collaborative ways of working. As someone elected to serve your local community, these decisions are bound to be divisive and stressful, especially when it comes to explaining these decisions to and dealing with the impact of those choices on their communities. Undue stress is not helpful to effective decision making, performance or leadership.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has produced a workbook aimed at helping councillors to understand the signs of stress and to develop strategies to deal with it, as well as building up their own personal resilience in the role.

Charter for Elected Member Development

The Charter signifies a commitment from a local authority to introduce a policy that supports and encourages councillor development.

The Member Development Charter and higher-level Charter Plus provide a robust and structured framework to:

- Encourage councils to develop an effective strategy or approach to member development.
- Recognise those councils that have developed an effective approach.
- Encourage councils to continue that development and share experiences and learning.

There are five stages in the Charter process:

Stage 1 Commitment to the Charter and an Action Plan

The council will undertake a self-assessment against the Charter criteria and based on the self-assessment will develop an Action Plan.

Stage 2 Improving the development of the elected members

The Council works towards achieving the Charter and meeting the requirements of the Action Plan

Stage 3 Assessment

An on-site assessment will be carried out by a trained team of elected members / officers. A comprehensive report will be sent within one month of the assessment date.

Stage 4 Awarding the Charter

When the authority has been assessed and once you have been awarded Charter status the certificate will be issued.

Stage 5 Reassessment

Authorities are reassessed after three years to ensure commitment to the charter has been continued. The benefits and possibility of working towards the Charter Plus can be explored at any time.

Achieving the Charter is subject to assessment against meeting the framework criteria:

- There is a clear commitment to councillor development;
- The council has a strategic approach to councillor development;
- Learning and Development opportunities are regularly promoted; and
- Learning and development is effective in building capacity.

At the time of writing, all NI councils have signed up to the Charter and at this juncture nine councils have achieved the standard with three further achieving the exceptional Charter Plus Standard, a bigger success ratio than anywhere in the UK.



Annual Halloween Festivities, Derry City and Strabane District Council

NILGA Regional Programme for Elected Member Development

In partnership with councils and the Local Government Training Group (LGTG), together with the National Association of Councillors, NILGA also coordinates an annual programme of learning and development for elected members. It includes a module based ILM (endorsed award) accredited Planning Leadership Programme and a module based LM (Level 7) accredited Place-shaping Leadership Programme.

Accredited learning provision will begin each September. In addition, the NILGA

Regional Programme will also provide learning and development sessions ranging from Masterclasses on the Scrutiny and Challenge, Performance Improvement, GDPR, Civil Contingencies etc.

Further Learning and Development sessions will include workshops on the use of data and evidence, Code of Conduct and Chairing skills etc, as well as sessions responsive to emerging identified need. Council's will receive a copy of NILGA's Regional Programme for the year regularly and updates will also be provided to assist your diary planning.

Councillor Viewpoint

Councillor Paul Hamill

(Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council)

I was first elected onto Antrim and Newtownabbey Council in May 2014. As someone who was new to politics and local government there was a lot to learn and understand.

This first term has been like serving an apprenticeship, in which I got to know the workings of local government and role of the councillor in this 21st Century. As with any apprenticeship there are tools required in order to be successful and effective in your role.

For me one of the key learning experiences and tools that I gained was through the NILGA Regional Programme for Elected Member Development in which I completed an ILM Level 7 in Leadership.

Like a hammer and saw to a joiner this course is specifically designed to give councillors the tools required to fulfil the role of an elected representative in the most strategic and effective way possible.

I found it extremely beneficial, in particular, it highlighted to me that councillors must work in partnership with fellow councillors, officers, and other statutory agencies in order to co-design and co-produce outcomes that can be delivered for the prosperity and benefit of residents.

I would highly recommend this course to all councillors, as it has certainly boosted my own confidence and opened my eyes to the variety of skills and leadership styles that are required to be a competent and effective public leader.



Research undertaken by the University of Birmingham in 2016¹ considered the changing role of the councillor in response to the context within which they operate. The contextual challenges, some more applicable to the Northern Ireland context than others, include: changing citizens expectations, new technologies, different scales of working and organisation of public services at local level. The research reveals how the new role for councillors are being reshaped by their relationships with both citizens and officers. As well as this, the research considered² how the challenges foster different forms of engagement with place. In doing so, it was found³ they raise questions about members profiles, the potential profiles, the potential career path of a councillor and suggest a number of skills which are likely to be important in the future.

These challenges have encouraged a reimagining of role from what traditionally would have been considered a local volunteer to what is now more akin to the director at the head of large organisations with multi-million pound budgets and very substantial staff complements.

The research (Mangan, *et al.*, 2016) describes how the role of a councillor can now be understood as one associated with being a: steward, advocate, orchestrator, sensemaker, buffer, catalyst and entrepreneur. These new qualities require councillors to expand their skill sets and move beyond traditional training offerings to continually learn new skills. Given the seismic shift in the expectations of the role, in terms of the strategic direction, members are now called on to provide political leadership for what are continually evolving local authorities so they operate successfully in a plan-led and policy-driven environment to positively influence social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

¹ Mangan, Needham, Bottom and Parker (2016) *The 21st Century Councillor*

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*

Part 1 (d)

Outside Bodies

All councils appoint elected members to represent the interests of the local authority on a diverse range of outside bodies. This is a key element of a councillor's role. Working corporately with partner bodies to serve his or her constituents, and in so doing, instil a civic responsibility at the same time.

Outside bodies may be local (within the Council area), regional (across a number of councils) or national (covering Northern Ireland and in some circumstances across rest of UK, Ireland or internationally).

Your input into Outside Bodies will be determined by a number of factors:

- *Your interests and skills;*
- *Your ability to participate within an overall timetable of responsibilities;*
- *Whether or not you are considered for appointment (processes of selection can involve nominations being based upon Council's political make up, as part of a wider selection of appointments categorised as "Positions of Responsibility").*

Typically, within a council's Committee Administration structure, a list of outside bodies exists, subject to change as new bodies emerge and other bodies cease, with appointments to these being subject to a process at the council's Annual General Meeting (AGM). Appointments can last for one year, or for a full electoral term, subject to performance and criteria, depending upon your council's policy.

Similarly, within NILGA, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, a selection process based on the D'Hondt system takes place for a full electoral term for Outside Bodies requiring councillor representation across all of N. Ireland and further afield.

The D'Hondt System

Under the Local Government Act 2014, the d'Hondt system is the default method for appointing Councillors to 'Positions of Responsibility', which include nominations to outside bodies.

The d'Hondt, or highest average method, is named after a Belgian lawyer from the 1870s. Unlike single transferable vote, it does not use a quota or formula to allocate seats or posts. Instead, these are allocated singularly and one after another. The basic idea is that a party's vote total is divided by a certain figure that increases as it wins more seats.

As the divisor becomes bigger, the party's total in succeeding rounds gets smaller, allowing parties with lower initial totals to win seats. The divisor in the first round is one

(i.e. it has no effect) and thereafter it is the total number of seats gained plus one.

Below is an example of how the system would work when being used to allocate committee chairpersons in the Assembly. Suppose the number of seats won in the Assembly were as in the top line of the table in figure 1.

Follow each round horizontally across the table to see which party has the biggest total and therefore wins that round. Follow each party's total vertically to see it decrease as it wins more seats.

A has the highest total, 39, so wins the first round. A's figure is now divided by 2 (its total seats + 1) to give a new figure of 19.5. The highest total for round two, on the second line, is 23 for F - which wins the seat and sees its figure reduced to 11.5. Round three goes to

A, again as its adjusted figure of 19.5 is again the highest. The new A figure is 13 - its original total of 39 divided by 3 (2 seats + one).

Rounds four and five go to G and B with totals of 17 and 16 respectively. Their adjusted figures are 8.5 and 8. The highest total for the sixth round is 13, giving A its third representative.

The party's new figure is 9.75, based on its original total of 39 divided by 4 (3 seats + 1). The final round in this example goes to F with a total of 11.5. If the table continued, the new F figure would be 7.67. This process would continue until all the posts or seats are filled.

The 2014 Act permits two alternative methods of selecting positions of responsibility - the Sainte-Laguë Method and the Single Transferable Vote (STV) method. These methods may only be used where 80% of council so agree at the first Annual General Meeting following an election.

For the purposes of the Councillor's Guide, we have provided examples of key Outside Bodies which exist in all 11 councils in N. Ireland. However, you should find and review a full list for your own local authority.

Figure 1: These figures are for illustrative purposes only.

Round	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	39	16	2	2	9	23	17
2	19.5	16	2	2	9	23	17
3	19.5	16	2	2	9	11.5	17
4	13	16	2	2	9	11.5	17
5	13	16	2	2	9	11.5	8.5
6	13	8	2	2	9	11.5	8.5
7	9.75	8	2	2	9	11.5	8.5

Sainte Laguë Method

This method is very similar to the d'Hondt process, except that the divisor is doubled – i.e. it becomes twice the number of seats held plus 1.

Single Transferable Vote Method

This is the method of voting used at local government elections in Northern Ireland.

A single transferable vote is one which is:

- (a) Capable of being given so as to indicate the voter's order of preference for candidates; and
- (b) Capable of being transferred to the next choice when the vote is not needed to give a prior choice the necessary quota of votes or when a prior choice is eliminated from the list of candidates because of a deficiency in the number of votes given for that person.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

PCSPs (Policing and Community Safety Partnerships) are local bodies made up of councillors and independent people from each council area who work to make our community safer. They do this by focussing on the policing and community safety issues that matter most in your council area.



PCSPs have a range of duties which are set in legislation:

- **consult and engage** with the local community on the issues of concern in relation to policing and community safety. Each PCSP has a Policing Committee with a distinct responsibility to provide views to the relevant district commander and the Policing Board on policing matters;
- **identify and prioritise** the particular issues of concern and prepare plans for how these can be tackled;
- **monitor** the performance of the police and work to gain the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime; and
- **deliver** a reduction in crime and enhance community safety in each district, directly through interventions, through the work of delivery groups or through support for the work of others.

PCSPs work with the community to identify issues of concern in the local area and prepare plans to deliver practical solutions. They also work in partnership with other organisations which contribute to community safety in the area.

The Policing Board and the Department of Justice have set a number of strategic objectives for PCSPs to meet.

Local Action Group (LAG)



Local Action Groups are statutory rural development partnerships across 10 council areas governed by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), underpinned by funding allocations to enable economic development initiatives in and across eligible rural areas of councils. LAGs consist of membership from a variety of rural partners including councillors, small businesses, community representatives, farming, academic, government and environmental bodies, working together to manage investment designed under the French origin “**LEADER**” concept, simply translated as *links between actions for the development of the rural economy*.

The Leader delivery model for the 2014/20 programme (it is anticipated that the LAG partnerships will evolve and deliver investment beyond 2020, dependent upon the outcomes of negotiations around EU exit) establishes 3 sets of relationships:

The first is that of the LAG as a Contractor to DAERA for the delivery of an agreed Strategy.

The second is the council as a Contractor to DAERA for the delivery of administrative services and facilities for use by the LAG.

The third is that of the LAG as a consumer of services and facilities drawn down from its council which it must manage across the lifetime of its Strategy delivery operation.

National Association of Councillors (NAC)

The National Association of Councillors (NAC) is a recognised body within local government.

The Association represents councillors’ interests on all aspects of their work and remuneration and gives advice on welfare benefits and taxation. All councillors from all parties and independent members in Northern Ireland are members of the Association and collectively they work for the improvement of local government and the local communities they represent.

The NAC has close links with other council members throughout the UK and Ireland and works alongside the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), the representative body for councils in Northern Ireland, on programmes of work and campaigns to support councillors, including on many councillor learning and development initiatives.

National Association of Councillors Northern Ireland

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Newtownards, BT23 4YH

tel: 028 9181 9413

email: naoc@btconnect.com

www.nationalassociationofcouncillorsni.org.uk

Office Hours:

Monday & Tuesday 9am to 4.30pm

Wednesday 9am to 1pm

Civil Contingencies: Information for Elected Members

What is an Emergency?

“Any event (happening with or without warning) causing or threatening death or injury, damage to property or the environment or disruption to the community, which because the scale of its effects cannot be dealt with by the emergency services and public service providers as part of their day to day activities.”

(Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland, 2011)

Figure 1 (below): *The Elements of Civil Contingencies illustrating the six activities required to accomplish resilience.*



What Role does the Council Play in an Emergency?

The role of council in an emergency is to:

- Provide **support** for the emergency services and/or those engaged in response and link with these agencies throughout the emergency.

- Provide services such as sandbag distribution, clean-up operations, specialist staff and/or equipment and manpower, **where requested**.
- Provide council building(s) **where requested** including assistance in the provision of suitable accommodation for an emergency support centre.
- Maintain normal council services at an appropriate level commensurate with circumstances, despite disruption and the possible redeployment of staff.
- Co-ordinate the actions of public services in recovery from the emergency and restoring the local community to normal.

Role of Elected Members in Emergency Situations

Elected Members can provide a useful and effective conduit for the flow of information between the council's Emergency Management Team, the emergency services and the community affected by the emergency.

Members will often be aware of vulnerabilities within their own community and they will also be aware of community strengths and resources. This will assist in facilitating accurate and timely dissemination of information and also provide an essential information source.

On discovering a potential emergency:

contact emergency services. Emergency numbers are also provided overleaf for relevant agencies. Some hotlines have been provided for the use of Elected Members only.

When Council is involved in an emergency

situation: The Chief Executive will ensure that a channel of communication is set up to provide regular updates to all Elected Members.

Media enquiries: A council Communications Officer will assist Elected Members in responding to media requests. In the immediate aftermath of an emergency, communication with the media will normally be led by the PSNI Director of Press and Public Relations. Only the PSNI should release information on casualties and deceased.

During an Emergency

- *Be aware of the role of Elected Members described within the council's Emergency Plan*
- *Attempt to contact constituents in your area who are affected. This should be in person where possible as the visible presence of councillors can bring assurance to people who are affected.*
- *Liaise as appropriate with your own party, MLAs, Executive Ministers and MPs to gain information, to inform or to lobby for support.*
- *Remember that work of other agencies may be sensitive during an emergency and that this may be undertaken in the council's Emergency Management Room*
- *Where possible, when liaising with Emergency Services, Utility companies and Lead Government Agencies use dedicated phone lines (listed on this leaflet).*
- *Be aware of the sensitivities of the emergency, especially if attending council premises which are involved in the emergency, along with MLA's or other officials (for example a community or leisure centre where people are sheltering).*
- *Councillors will be aware that such visits can be accompanied by television cameras and this may impinge on the sensitive and confidential nature of an emergency response, and the occupants may be distressed and extremely vulnerable. Councillors are advised to seek the support of the Chief Executive or Head of Communications to facilitate such visits.*

Dealing with the Media

- *In emergencies the opportunity may arise for councillors to speak to the media. Councillors will be aware that objective, clear, factual information is essential and that misinformation can greatly exacerbate / confuse any emergency situation.*
- *When preparing for an interview in an emergency situation, councillors are encouraged to contact the Head of Communications or the Chief Executive for up-to-date information. He/she is asked to work closely with the Chief Executive, and the Head of Communications to ensure that public messages are accurate, up-to-date and in the public interest.*
- *When an emergency is serious it is useful to have a single spokesperson. The civic leadership role of the Mayor/Chairperson can most readily be used. In other cases where technical expertise is required, a council Director may act as emergency spokesperson.*

2

The Local Government Sector

...Councils in Northern Ireland have a wide remit from local planning, local enterprise, waste and off-street parking.

Part 2 (a)

Background and Context

Local government touches the lives of everybody, every day. Councils in Northern Ireland have a wide remit from local planning, local enterprise, waste and off-street parking. Guiding councils in the delivery of such functions is a series of underpinning legislation and bureaucracy that most citizens do not see. As a councillor, understanding how it works will help you to represent your local community.

Background to Local Government Reform and the Local Government (NI) Act 2014

In May 2015, further to a year of operating in shadow form, the most wide-ranging reform to local government since 1972 took place, as 26 councils were replaced by 11 new authorities with new names and an expanded set of powers and functions. This reform was designed to modernise local government and improve services and to create stronger, more effective local government. The additional powers and responsibilities included some powerful tools to enable councils to shape their areas and communities, allowing more creativity in delivering services, allowing councils to be more flexible and responsive to local needs; bringing power closer to citizens. There should also be long-term financial benefits to running 11 councils instead of 26.

The framework for this reform was provided in a new piece of legislation - **The Local Government (NI) Act 2014** - which replaced, amended, negated or enhanced various parts of the pre-existing Local Government (NI) Act 1972, and introduced many new features for governance and operation of the 11 new councils. This Act was the backbone for the production of a huge raft of secondary



legislation, some of which has yet to be completed. The 2014 Act is now the main piece of legislation used by councils, but there are some pre-existing pieces of legislation and regulation that are still in use.

Also, the 2014 Act merely sets the scene for transfer of functions; each transfer requires a piece of primary legislation in itself. The biggest piece of legislation of this kind so far was the Planning (NI) Act 2011 which predated the Local Government Act by some three years, but which didn't come into force until 2015. The greatly anticipated Regeneration Bill is yet to be passed, and any future transfers will require separate legislation, although this is linked to the Local Government Act.

What new responsibilities were the councils given?

Transferred functions: A number of functions previously delivered by NI Executive departments are now carried out by councils. These include local development planning, local economic development and off-street car parking. Some functions were due to transfer, such as regeneration, but this has not yet taken place. Discussions are ongoing to

ensure the vision of strong local government is achieved and this is very much a work in progress. Councils in Northern Ireland are responsible for approximately one sixth of the powers and spending that councils in Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland have, by way of context.

Community Planning: Since 2015 councils have been leading a community planning process to enhance social, economic and environmental wellbeing. This is done in partnership with other public service providers and departments in order to collectively co-design and enhance public services. It enables councils to influence how and where services are provided. Each council has produced a local community plan which they are now working with partners to implement. Information on your local plan is available on your council website.

Councils have also been given a **General Power of Competence**; allowing a council to act with similar freedom to an individual, unless there is a law to prevent it from doing so. It allows a council to act in its own interest and develop innovative approaches to help improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area.

- *New performance improvement regime to deliver high quality, efficient services – includes the requirement for councils to report annually on performance.*
- *Establishment of a Partnership Panel - made up of Executive Ministers, councillors from the new councils and members of NILGA to discuss matters of mutual interest. **
- *Dual mandate ended - a bar was placed on MLAs, MPs and MEPs from also being elected or being councillors.*

* At the time of writing, the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly are in suspension and the Partnership Panel is therefore unable to meet. NILGA has designed and implemented an interim **Central-Local Political Partnership Forum** to enable regional cross-party consideration of non-contentious priority issues and this has been meeting quarterly. **Your council will have representation on this.**

What are the other changes to councils?

- *New governance arrangements – for the first time, sharing council positions of responsibility across political parties and independents is enshrined in law. The public will also now have more access to council meetings and documents.*
- *New ethical standards regime - there is a mandatory code of conduct for councillors.*

Names and status of the 11 councils

The names of the 11 local government districts were set out in the Local Government (Boundaries) Act (NI) 2008, but legislation was put in place to enable the councils to change these names, which some did.

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The new councils were also required to consider status - whether they would be a district council, borough council or, in some cases, a city council. This issue is linked to a council's name as the status is usually reflected in the name. If a council wished to call itself a 'borough council', it was able to opt to continue an existing borough charter within its district or it could have applied to the Secretary of State for the grant of a new charter. Councils which had a city within their new district could have chosen to call themselves city councils. Regulations provided councils with options in relation to their charters and borough status, resulting in the names and statuses currently in place.

Devolution

Devolution can be described as the moving of power and/or responsibility from a higher level in an organisation to a lower level, or from central government to a local government, or further to even more local entities or partner(s).

On 2 December 1999, the UK Parliament devolved powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the first time. Devolution itself, however, was not new to Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Parliament and Executive, which governed between 1921 and 1972, were also devolved institutions. When they were suspended in 1972, Northern Ireland came under Direct Rule from Westminster.

From a council and councillor perspective, devolution in a very practical sense involves the transfer of powers and responsibilities from national level bodies – including Westminster and Stormont - to local authorities. Devolution below Stormont is a democratically important continuum.

In 2015, the (then new) 11 local councils received a small number of key devolved powers, including Planning, Community Planning, further economic development

powers and some neighbourhood services – off street car parking being one.

This devolution of powers and responsibilities was underpinned by key pieces of legislation, including:

1. *The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014*

www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2014/8/contents

2. *Within the above Act, elements of devolved and amended legislative power, including the General Power of Competence (see Guide, page 18 of this section need to change when page numbering finalised)*

[www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2014/8/section/79 and amendments to the Planning Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2014/8/section/79_and_amendments_to_the_Planning_Act_(Northern_Ireland)_2011)

www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2014/8/section/77

Importantly for you as a councillor, this transfer of power was not an end, but a beginning, of a process. As part of the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland (RPA), the Local Government Act 2014 includes reference to the need to seek to add powers to councils, through a so called “Augmentation Review”. This has not been dealt with due to the suspension of the Legislative Assembly. Consequently, NILGA, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, has developed a Programme for Local Government, details of which can be found here:

Since this Programme was agreed as a “vision piece” for local councils to work towards more powers, resources and responsibilities in 2016, the New Policy Institute (NPI) has published (June 2018) a key devolution progress report with recommendations, entitled “**Devolution Within Northern Ireland**”.



2018 Marathon, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

As a councillor, it is of particular interest in your role to look strategically at your council's policies and in regard to your formulation and scrutiny of policies. It is important that you understand:

- *the arguments around devolution;*
- *the trends associated with devolving power from larger, centralised institutions to and through councils to the communities we serve; and*
- *the wider societal and economic narrative around devolution.*

NILGA and your council will be very useful sources of information, learning and participation on devolution to and through councils, which is very much a progressive exercise over time.

The value of devolution is that it offers benefits to making decisions at a scale more closely connected to citizens. Strong local government and empowered local communities provide the foundations for evolving devolution and considering new ways to govern our society.

Locality, a membership network for community organisations in the UK, recognise the power of communities in building a fairer society - and usefully explain how:

“We need radical action to strengthen our local institutions, devolve tangible power, resources and control to communities”¹

From a NI Governmental context, the impact of not having devolution is captured in recommendations from the “Devolution and Democracy in Northern Ireland – **Dealing with the Deficit**” consultation and report, lead by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (NIAC) in late 2018:

When the Executive is restored, the Committee recommends that an Assembly committee be set up to review local government finances and devolved powers. If the Executive is not formed within 12 months of the publication of this report, an independent review should be commissioned by the Secretary of State.²

¹ “People Power” Report, Commission on the Future of Localism, January 2019.

² <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmniaf/613/61309.htm>

Part 2 (b)

Council Functions - What Councils do and don't do

How does Local Government function in its wider context?

The 11 district councils form Northern Ireland's third tier of government, below Westminster and the devolved government at Stormont. Councils are involved in policy and decision-making and the direct delivery of local services. Citizens within each of the 80 District Electoral Areas (DEA's) in Northern Ireland elect councillors to constitute their local council. A Local Government District (LGD) is the entire area controlled by a district, borough or city council.

How often are councillors elected?

Local government elections normally take place on the first Thursday in May every four years. Councillors are elected by proportional representation using the single transferable vote system, with each DEA forming a multi-seat constituency. The next election (following May 2019) is therefore scheduled to be in May 2023.

How is Local Government organised?

How are Council Boundaries decided?

Each DEA comprises a number of wards whose boundaries are reviewed every 10-15 years by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner. The boundaries of the 11 councils were recommended by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner in 2009 and finalised with amendments by the Northern Ireland Executive in June 2012. The District Electoral Commissioner, who is appointed by the Secretary of State, recommends boundaries of DEA's.

Commissioners try to avoid dividing wards between parliamentary constituencies, as they often represent local communities, although this is sometimes inevitable. The current 80 DEAs were established in late 2013 following a review by the Commissioner.

How are councils categorised?

Councils in Northern Ireland can either be categorised as City, Borough or District Councils. Where a council has a City or Borough status it has two other ceremonial privileges. It may designate up to one quarter of its members as aldermen and confer the freedom of the City or Borough on distinguished individuals or groups. City and Borough Councils appoint a Mayor and Deputy Mayor while District Councils appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

How was the present system of Local Government formed?

The 11-council model of NI Local Government was developed and then implemented in 2014/15 as part of the Review of Public Administration.

Councillor Viewpoint

Alderman Freda Donnelly
(Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council)

Freda Donnelly, married with four grownup daughters, lives in Richhill and farms sheep and cattle, and runs a coffee shop business with her daughter.

I have been a Councillor from 2001 and it has been a great privilege to represent my constituents and to lobby on their behalf.

I had the honour of being the Mayor of Armagh City Council in 2011/ 2012 and had

the privilege of being the first Lord Mayor as HM bestowed Lord Mayoralty on the City as part of her Diamond Jubilee wedding celebrations.

I am member of the PCSP, the Planning Committee, the Leisure Committee and the Community Planning Committee.

I represent the Council on NILGA, where I am the Vice President for the DUP, an organisation that I really enjoy being part of.

In my spare time, I enjoy reading and retail therapy and spending time with family and friends.

Council Functions

There is a statutory basis in everything a council does, meaning that no council can exercise any function without holding the appropriate authority in law. If a council acts without authority, its decisions or expenditure may be held to be “ultra vires” meaning “outside the powers” of the council. The roles and functions of councils are established in the Local Government Act 1972 and in other legislation including the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and the Local Government (NI) Act 2014. Councils carry out most of the functions outlined below. However, not every council will have the entire range of services, depending upon its geographical location and size:

- waste collection and disposal
- recycling and waste management
- local planning functions
- civic amenity provision
- grounds maintenance
- street cleaning
- cemeteries
- public conveniences
- food safety
- health and safety

- environmental protection
- environmental improvement
- estates management - building design and maintenance
- building control-inspection and regulation of new buildings
- regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation
- dog control
- licensing, such as entertainment licensing
- enforcement byelaws such as those around litter
- sports, leisure services and recreational facilities
- parks, open spaces and playgrounds
- community centres
- arts, heritage and cultural facilities
- registration of births, deaths and marriages

Planning

- local development plan functions
- development management and enforcement

Roads

- off-street parking (except Park and Ride)
- road Closures for special events

Local economic development

- start a business programme and enterprise shows
- youth entrepreneurship (such as Prince's Trust and Shell Livewire)
- social entrepreneurship
- Capital Investment
- neighbourhood renewal funding relevant to enterprises initiatives

Local tourism

- small-scale tourism accommodation development
- providing business support including business start-up advice, along with training and delivery of customer care schemes

- providing advice to developers on tourism policies and related issues
- capital investment

Heritage

- control of alterations, extension and demolition of listed buildings
- conservation area designation and management
- listed building enforcement notices
- compensation where listed building consent has been revoked or modified
- issuing of Building Preservation Notices.
- issuing notices to require Urgent Works to preserve a building
- community listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest

Local councils are not responsible for the following areas:

- education
- personal social services
- roads
- public housing
- fire service
- police service
- trading standards
- drainage water
- sewerage
- libraries
- street lighting
- collection of rates
- transport
- urban regeneration

The Chief Executive is the head of the corporate organisation, is the accounting officer and undertakes electoral duties. Frequently the Chief Executive may have his or her own department which deals with the central or corporate functions of the Council.

Permitted forms of Governance

The Local Government Act 2014 provides several alternative forms of governance which a council may choose to operate.

These are:

- *A committee system*
- *Executive Arrangements*
- *Prescribed Arrangements*

A committee system is the default option, but councils may choose one of the other methods if at least 80% of councillors present and voting so decide.

Committee System

Council committees are arranged in the following categories:

- *A central council Committee (which deals with overarching policies);*
- *Quasi-Judicial committees which have council powers and make decisions on regulatory matters such as planning and licensing;*
- *Functional committees (which are designed to deal with specific issues, for instance a Leisure Services Committee); and*
- *Joint committees that draw /contain members from a number of councils (which deal with wider issues such as issues as tourism)*

Executive Arrangements

There are two permitted forms of Executive arrangements: A “cabinet-style executive” which must contain between 6 to 10 councillors

Many decisions which would be taken by the full council under a committee system would be taken by the Executive. If this form of governance is chosen, councils must also operate one or more overview and scrutiny committees, which have certain powers to review decisions made by the Executive.

Prescribed Arrangements

If a council wishes to operate a different form of governance, instead of either committee or executive arrangements, it may apply to the Department for Communities who may prescribe alternative arrangements. Prior to prescribing any new arrangement, the Department must satisfy itself that the new arrangements would represent an improvement, would ensure that decisions are taken in an efficient, transparent and accountable way and would be appropriate for all councils to consider.

- *A “streamlined committee executive” where each committee must contain between 6 and 10 Councillors*

Councillor Viewpoint

Cllr Alistair Cathcart

(Ards and North Down Borough Council)

Aged 25, I became a Councillor in December 2013 as a co-option to replace Peter Weir MLA on the former North Down Council. Having worked in an MLA's Office I was familiar with the constituency side of things, but I had to learn the structures and procedures of Council which does take a bit of time.

I later stood in the 2014 elections for the new Ards and North Down Council and got elected to represent the Bangor Central DEA. It is an honour to be voted by the people of your own town to represent them and the town's interests.

On Council, along with my role as Chairman of the Bangor Town Steering Group, I enjoy being in the room and having an influence on decisions that will ultimately shape the future of my hometown.

I currently sit on the Environment Committee, as well as the Planning Committee, which I chair at an interesting time when the Council is creating a new Local Development Plan which will shape the Borough for years to come.

In terms of outside bodies, I represent the Council on Arc21 as well as being a member on the Ards and North Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

What I think I enjoy most is the ‘small wins’ for constituents. Getting a street light fixed when the darkness was worrying an elderly constituent, repairing a favourite park bench, or getting the Housing Executive to replace a broken boiler in time for Christmas. These issues may seem minor but for that person it may mean a lot.

How are decisions made

Councils have different ways of making decisions; most have a committee structure. This means the council will set up committees to deal with specific areas of the council's business. These committees will make decisions or recommendations with the agreement of the council.

Councils can also make decisions using executive arrangements. This is where smaller groups of councillors take decisions on a range of matters within an agreed framework set out by the council.

Whichever system is used to make decisions, there must be a full council meeting on which all councillors sit. This is responsible for setting the policy framework, agreeing the budget and spending plans and making constitutional decisions. It is also a forum for debate on major issues affecting the council and its local area.

The Constitution

As a new councillor you will receive a copy of your council's constitution which sets out how the council conducts its business, including:

- *who is responsible for making decisions and how decisions are made*
- *procedural matters (set out in the standing orders)*
- *the role of officers*
- *standards and ethical governance.*

It is important to familiarise yourself with these parts of the constitution, in particular the standing orders. These specify the terms of reference of the council's various member structures, the rules on declarations of interest, the timings and order of business at council meetings and the rules of debate.

Agendas and Minutes

Council agendas provide advance notice of the date, time and place of meetings and the business to be transacted. In the case of the council meeting there is a period of at least three days statutory notice.

Some meeting terms include:

- Quorum – number of members required for the meeting to take place.
- The Chair – regulates the meeting and ensures proceedings are properly conducted.
- Standing Orders - the rules for conducting business in council and committees.
- Points of Order – used if a member believes standing orders aren't being followed, Chair rules on the point.
- Motions and Resolutions – council and its committees consider and vote on motions, if approved by the majority, they become a resolution.

- Amendments – this is the modification of the wording of a proposal, each amendment is dealt with by the Chair in order.
- Adopting Committee Reports – The Chair of the committee is usually responsible for ensuring that Council formally adopts committee reports.
- Notice of Motion – way for member to submit a motion in their own name, usually submitted to the council CEO within a specified period.
- Interruptive or Closure Motions – bring consideration of a matter to an end, Chair needs to be satisfied that business has been aired sufficiently.
- Voting – the law provides that councils must normally reach a decision on any matter by majority of those present voting via a show of hands.
 - *Members must be present, no provision for proxy voting*
 - *Not everyone present needs to vote*
 - *A councillor can request that the voting on any question is recorded*
 - *Qualified Majority Voting – This procedure requires certain decisions to have the support of 80% of those present and voting.*
- Minutes – the official record of the business carried out, councils are required by law to keep official minute books, responsibility falls on the Clerk and Chief Executive.

Policy and Decision Making

A **policy** consists of principles, rules, and guidelines formulated or adopted by an organisation to reach its long-term goals. Your council will have many policies. Obtain any available list of these from a Member Services officer, if possible, familiarising yourself with **internal** (how the council and its members /

officers conduct themselves and comply with policies and legislation) and **external** (how the council approaches its services, for example Economic Development and Planning) policies.

Policies are often connected, for example Community Planning and Local Development Planning must be considered collectively, as well as separately, to develop your understanding of the overall shared vision, direction and **Corporate Plan** for your council.

Councillors can influence policies through:

- *Membership of committees, sub committees and Full Council itself;*
- *Being a member of a Partnership Board, Voluntary Body or Working Group;*
- *Sitting within a political group;*
- *Providing evidence, through casework*

Policy Making

The NI Executive Office provides practical guidance on policy-making, applicable to all public servants. Many of the key elements which it advocates can be applied by District Councils, for example, on “Joined Up Government” and “Evidence Based Policy Making”.

A Practical Guide to Policy Making in Northern Ireland is available to download.

Local government financ

This section gives a brief overview of financial matters in local government.

Local Government Expenditure - Revenue and Capital

Local government exists to provide a range of services. Expenditure on these services fall into one of two categories, namely:



Jobs Fair, Valley Leisure Centre, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Capital expenditure - monies expended on the acquisition or enhancement of tangible assets such as land, buildings, vehicles, and plant and equipment, which are intended to be used for a period in excess of twelve months; and

Revenue expenditure - monies expended on the day-to-day provision of services e.g. wages and salaries, heat and light, rent and rates, and the purchase of services and materials.

Sources of Income

Capital Income

Several sources of capital income are available but the two most common are:

Grants - central government sometimes contributes towards the cost of a specific capital project or asset. At the present time, most capital grants tend to originate from Europe or from a specific body such as the Foundation for Sport and the Arts; and

Borrowing - the bulk of local government capital outlay is paid for with borrowed funds. These funds have to be repaid with interest over the term of the borrowing.

Councils have powers to raise funds from a variety of sources, but most borrowings come from the Government Loans Fund, which typically offers funds at a very competitive interest rate. Funds may be borrowed from other sources, such as banks. These funds sometimes offer greater flexibility in terms of repayment than borrowings from the Government Loans Fund.

As borrowings must be repaid, each year a councils revenue account makes a number of payments known as 'loan charges' or 'debt charges'. This expenditure simply represents the annual repayment of borrowed funds together with interest thereon.

The requirement for councils to comply with the Prudential Code in 2012 was accompanied by the granting of increased autonomy to councils in relation to their borrowing practices. Prior to 2012, councils had to seek approval from the Department of Environment (now the Department for Communities) if they wanted to borrow funds. The powers conferred on councils by the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 resulted in councils assuming complete responsibility and accountability for their borrowing. This autonomy is regulated by the requirement for councils to set authorised and operational borrowing limits and to establish Prudential Indicators and publish their performance in relation to these indicators on an annual basis. Councils may also make direct contributions from its revenue account to finance its capital expenditure in a particular financial year. Alternatively, it may make revenue contributions to a Capital Fund to build up a 'ring-fenced' source of finance for specific capital projects. Generally, direct or indirect contributions from revenue are small or limited by statute.

Revenue Income

Revenue expenditure is generally funded by revenue income.

There are four main sources of revenue income. These are:

District Rate Income – this is by far the most significant source of council revenue income. Each council is empowered to receive part of the property taxes (Rates) levied on rate payers. The element of the Rates that rate payers pay which goes to their local district council is known as the councils district Rate income.

Every council calculates a district Rate each year, which is estimated to be sufficient, then

added to the council's other income streams to fund the council's expenditure.

The element of the Rates that rate payers pay, which does not go to their local district council, is known as regional Rate income, which is paid to the Northern Ireland Assembly to contribute to the cost of central government services.

Fees and charges - these are monies raised by each council by charging for those services that it is permitted to raise charges for. Examples include admission charges to leisure centres; building inspection fees; trade/commercial waste collection charges and rental income from catering franchises.

To date, legislative restrictions have prevented district councils from levying fees and charges which represent more than cost recovery. In other words, district councils do not trade for profit. This may change in the future as councils develop their use of the statutory General Power of Competence.

Specific revenue based government grants - sometimes central government departments make a financial contribution towards the running costs of council services. An example of a council service, which benefits from revenue based government funding is the District Council Good Relations Programme, which is funded jointly by Northern Ireland Executive Office and the eleven councils. As part of this programme, councils deliver agreed, outcome focused good relations projects supervised and managed by a team of Good Relations Officers (GROs); and

General grant - central government in Northern Ireland is empowered by the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to make de-rating, rate support and transferred functions grants to district councils.

The de-rating grant compensates councils for district Rate income that they lose due to certain types of property being 'de-rated'; the rate support grant assists less 'wealthy' (in terms of district Rate income) councils to provide services to their rate payers; and the transferred functions grant makes a contribution towards the costs of delivering services such as planning, which, prior to local government reform on 1 April 2015, were delivered by central government departments as opposed to district councils.

Councils may also establish revenue and capital reserves in any year to enable them to fund revenue and capital expenditure in subsequent years.

The introduction of Prudential borrowing, in 2012 has resulted in councils being empowered to maintain whatever level of reserves that they deem appropriate.

The Rating System in Northern Ireland

You will be aware that in Northern Ireland many public services are not administered by councils, being delivered by government departments or appointed public bodies in the 1970s, for example education, housing, personal social services, roads and water.

For this reason, the Rates levy in Northern Ireland is a combination of two elements, namely:

Regional Rate - this finances those public services that are not administered by councils and is struck by the Department of Finance at a uniform Rate for each of domestic and non-domestic sectors that is applied in every district council area; and

District Rate - varies from one district council area to another and finances those local services that are directly administered by district councils.

On average approximately 65% of a district council's income is generated from the district Rate.

Every district council is legally obligated to strike a separate district Rate for the domestic and non-domestic sectors in their area. This is because non-domestic Rates are levied on the basis of net annual (assumed rental) value, whereas domestic Rates are levied on basis of capital (assumed purchase) values.

Current Rating System

A discrete capital value system is used to apply a single tax rate to assess the Rates due in respect of each domestic property. Consequently, every domestic property rate payer could pay an amount, which is independent of every other domestic property apart from the fact that the capital value on which the Rate is assessed is capped under legislation at £400,000.

This system contrasts with the English system of banding, where households are allocated to one of several different bands according to their capital value. The band determines the amount of Rates to be paid, with all households within the same band paying the same amount.

Valuations for domestic properties are assessed on the capital value of the property based on 1 January 2005. When assessing the capital value, Land & Property Services (LPS) use information about the sale prices of houses in the district council area. They also assume that all properties have an average state of internal repair and fittings, such as a standard kitchen and bathroom.

If a property was built after 2005, the capital value will be assessed by comparing the property with similar properties that had been built prior to 2005.

The factors that are taken into consideration when valuing a property include:

- *size and type of property, such as detached, semi, terrace, flat etc.;*
- *location of the property;*
- *whether or not the property has a garage or other domestic outbuildings; and*
- *whether or not the property has central heating.*

“Size” means the external area of the property if it is a house and the internal area if it is an apartment.

Legislation requires, among other things, the maintenance and updating of the Valuation List. This list is based on each of the district council areas, sub-divided into wards with properties arranged street by street in basic alphabetical order and shows the Net Annual Value (NAV) of all properties.

Ratepayers have the right to inspect the list and extract information.

Non-domestic properties are still valued on the basis of rental values - otherwise known as NAV (Net Annual Values) – at a prescribed date. This value is then multiplied by the sum of the non-domestic district and regional Rates to arrive at the total non-domestic Rates to be paid in respect of each property.

Periodic revaluations of all non-domestic properties are carried out to ensure that the non-domestic Rate burden is equitably apportioned between all non-domestic

properties – the most recent revaluation was carried out during 2014 and took effect from 1 April 2015 using property values at 1 April 2013.

Annual Revenue Budget and Striking the District Rate

In order to strike the district domestic and non-domestic Rates, each council draws up detailed estimates of expenditure and income for each incoming financial year which runs from 1 April to 31 March. These estimates are referred to as the “Annual Rate Estimates” and a great deal of time and effort is devoted to their preparation.

The Annual Rate Estimates serve two purposes, namely:

- *they enable the council to calculate the district Rate income which it will need to deliver its services in the forthcoming financial year; and*
- *they serve as the basis for detailed budgets for the monitoring and control of revenue income and expenditure in the relevant financial year.*

Each council is required by legislation to strike its district Rates before the “prescribed date”, which is generally 15th of February in each year.

Annual Accounts

Councils are required to produce annual accounts in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom and the requirements of any Accounts Direction issued by the Department of Communities.

In these financial statements you will see a summary of the councils financial transactions

for the year of account including details of revenue income and expenditure, capital outlays and financing, and loans borrowed or repaid.

The financial statements follow a prescribed format and include an Annual Governance Statement, remuneration report, audit certificate issued by the Local Government Auditor and relevant notes to the accounts.

Legislation obliges each council to submit its draft annual financial statements to the Department for Communities by 30 June and to publish them on its website by 30 September.

Department for Communities

The Department for Communities (DfC) has statutory powers to request information, reports and returns from district councils and can order inquiries into any matter relating to council functions.

Where a council fails to discharge a statutory function, the DfC can direct it to take specified action. If a council fails to take such action, the Department can empower its officials to exercise the functions of the council.

As a result of some former central government functions transferring to councils in April 2015, the Local Government Act 2014 has provided the relevant central government departments with powers in relation to district council functions that are similar to the DfC’s powers.

Local Government Auditor

The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, as updated by the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, provides that the DfC may, with the consent of the Comptroller and Auditor General (the

C&AG), designate a member of Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) staff as the Local Government Auditor. Once designated, this Auditor carries out their statutory and other responsibilities, and exercise their professional judgment, independently of the DfC and the C&AG.

The statutory responsibilities and powers of the designated Local Government Auditor are set out in the 2005 Order and the 2014 Act. In discharging these, the Local Government Auditor is required to carry out their work in accordance with a Code of Audit Practice (the Code). The scope of external audit in local government is extended to cover not only the audit of the financial statements, but also the audited bodies' arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, as well as councils performance improvement responsibilities.

The Code focuses on how the Local Government Auditor should carry out their wider range of functions and the audit of the financial statements is conducted in accordance with International Auditing Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

The Local Government Auditor can, if considered appropriate, make a Public Interest Report on any matter coming to notice during an audit. In addition, they can, if considered appropriate, conduct a Special Inspection of a district council in relation to its performance improvement responsibilities.

The results of work undertaken by the Local Government Auditor are reported to the Members of district councils and local government bodies. Their report on each set of accounts is published with the accounts by the audited body. They also provide an Annual Audit Letter to each body, which is also

published by the audited body. In addition, a summary of their key findings at each district council in relation to the improvement audits and assessments will be published in their Annual Improvement Reports, which are published on the NIAO website.

Budgeting

You should, initially, ask for the councils overall budget and a broad Departmental breakdown. Councils in Northern Ireland each invest tens of millions of pounds annually and your strategic knowledge of budget is a starter for ten.

Budgets are useful tools for:

- *Forecasting future demands;*
- *Monitoring and controlling spending;*
- *Identifying gaps in provisions.*

For budgets to be effective, it is required that:

- *The appropriate employees and councillors are involved in setting the budget;*
- *Budget targets are achievable;*
- *The budget is monitored regularly, at least on a monthly basis;*
- *Action is taken to rectify mistaken estimates in the budget within the budgetary period;*
- *Lessons are learned for setting the next year's budget.*

Planning the budget takes place at both corporate and individual service level. Normal practice is for the Directors or Heads of Services to work with the Finance Officer and Chief Executive to produce budget proposals to be presented to council, often supported by a Rates Sub Committee of elected members. These proposals **must be finalised by a statutory date each year**, typically in February, which is when Council determines

the Rate (annual charge) to domestic and non-domestic citizens / customers.

Please note the following:

1. *The financial year typically runs from 1 April to 31 March, so upon your election the budgets for that year will already be agreed, although revisions are possible based on policy changes.*
2. *See Glossary of Terms for useful Financial Definitions, don't be deterred by abbreviations like "P&R" (Policy and Resources"!)*

The Council Workforce

The most valuable resource your council has is its employees.

As local government is a labour-intensive sector, it is vital that you develop skills in managing relations with the officers that you may engage with on a regular or occasional basis. Proper management principles require that any employee should only have one boss to whom he or she is responsible to avoid confusion where different people are asking for different responses. Accordingly, individual councillors may not instruct members of staff but if they believe something is not being done properly, they should raise the matter with the Chief Executive or Director of the relevant department.

A council's paid employees are called officers, all council officers must treat all political groups and individual councillors equally, fairly and remain politically neutral at all times.

You as a councillor will be responsible for setting the strategic direction and agreeing the policy framework of the council; officers are

responsible for delivering the council's policies and for the day-to-day operations.

Officers fall broadly into two main categories: front-line and support. Front-line officers deliver services to the public – for example; refuse collectors, animal welfare officers, leisure centre attendants and environmental health officers. Support officers ensure that front-line services and the democratic process can operate smoothly – for example through administrative, finance, legal, communications and IT support.

The Chief Executive and the senior management team will head up the main functions or departments of the council. Good member/officer relationships are important to a high-performing authority, but the relationship between the leader or elected mayor and the Chief Executive is particularly important and can have a profound effect on the council's performance.

Your council will have a protocol on working relationships between councillors and local government Officers. It relates to all aspects of the working environment, both physical and virtual. The protocol reflects the content of both the Employee and Councillor Codes of Conduct that demand the highest standards of personal conduct at all times. It upholds the seven Nolan Principles and the additional five principles of public life. Appendix 2 of **Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees** sets out The Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol.

Councillor Viewpoint

Cllr Laura Devlin

(Newry Mourne and Down District Council)

Having been a councillor for local government for the last six years I never cease to be astounded at the tremendous impact this role can have on the day to day lives of those I am proud to serve. Since being co-opted on to Council six years ago it has been the most incredible learning curve. This education began many years ago having worked for Eamonn O'Neill, Margaret Ritchie, Seán Rogers and now Colin McGrath in their Assembly Constituency Offices providing representation and delivering for our community. The role of a councillor at local government is one which allows me to not only see but also be a part of that delivery within the local community.

I balance my life within politics with my life at home with my husband Sean, son Tom and the newest addition to our Devlin clan - Baby Polly. The support I receive from my family (and indeed friendship circle) is one which I believe is vital for the wellbeing of every person who enters the political arena.

In these days of uncertainty, the role of local government is felt more acutely than ever. The campaign for local government in 2019 will set the tone for future debate here in Northern Ireland and I plan to make that debate as healthy and positive as possible. This is how we achieve real delivery. That is the lesson I have learnt from my political forebears and is the same lesson I want to pass on to my children and the wider community.

Part 2 (c)

Decisions and the Law

Overview and scrutiny are at the heart of local accountability. It is the principal democratic means, between elections, of ensuring that decisions made by the council and its partners are held to account. In many councils, scrutiny has built up a reputation as a strong voice in the policy development process and a place where ideas for improvement can be debated and evaluated.

Acting within the Statutory Powers of the Council

A council's existence and powers are a result of parliamentary legislation. Hence the council cannot go beyond those powers in making decisions.

Whilst a new General Power of Competence has been introduced (see below), councils still need to ensure that they are legally able to carry out any proposed action.

Your council has the following powers:

- *those which are clearly provided for by the legislation under which it proposes to act - known as express powers;*
- *those which can reasonably be read into that legislation - known as implied powers;*
- *those which can reasonably be said to be necessary companions to the express powers - known as incidental or consequential powers.*

In deciding that the council should act, you should be satisfied that the council is entitled under the legislation to take the suggested course of action. You could ask that the matter be referred to the councils legal advisers, or

request that officers present a consideration of possible legal consequences among their recommendations. Where discretion is given to council, it must exercise it. In holding power, councils have to choose between using power and not using it.

General Power of Competence

The Local Government Act 2014 introduced a new General Power of Competence in Northern Ireland. This is an important legislative statement emphasising that councils have the power to do anything an individual may do, in the interests of the District, unless specifically prohibited by law.

Your council will have established or will be establishing criteria in relation to formulating a policy which would ultimately be adopted by the council in exercising its General Power of Competence work. It is important that you understand its principles (bettering your district), its constraints (working within the law) and its benefits (for example, solving a long term problem of an unadopted road, building housing, developing business facilities). NILGA, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, works with councils in NI and across the UK in providing learning and best practice in this regard.

The European Convention on Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights was incorporated into NI law by the Human Rights Act 1998, which came into force in October 2000. There are 3 categories of rights under the Convention:

1. **Absolute rights:** These cannot be limited or qualified in any way and include: Article 3 right to freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment; the Article 4 prohibition on slavery

and enforced labour; and the Article 7 protection from retrospective criminal penalties

2. **Limited rights:** Certain Convention rights are subject to explicit and clearly defined limitations or exceptions, e.g. the Article 5 right to liberty, which allows for deprivation of liberty within narrowly specified parameters.
3. **Qualified rights** Interference with these rights is permissible only if it:
 - *Has its basis in law;*
 - *Is necessary in a democratic society, in that it;*
 - *Fulfils a pressing social need;*
 - *Pursues a legitimate aim;*
 - *Is proportionate to that aim; and*
 - *Is related to a permissible aim set out in the Article in question, such as the prevention of crime or the protection of public order or health.*

The European Convention has 18 elements, covering major issues like Marriage, Life, Freedom of Expression, Conscience and Religion.

Crucial for a councillor is a broad understanding of it, its proper interpretation and subsequent application, if required.

Further **reading & guidance** on Human Rights Law and the Convention, from a Northern Ireland perspective, is available from the NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC). This is a national human rights institution with a status accreditation from the United Nations. NIHRC is funded by United Kingdom government, but is an independent public body, established on the basis of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998). The associated Northern Ireland Act 1998 introduced a number of transformative legislative requirements, some of which are detailed overleaf.

Equality and Section 75

EQUALITY: Section 75 and The Disability Duties

Councillors must be aware of and implement their positive statutory equality responsibilities under the following legislation:

- *Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.*
- *'The Disability Duties': Section 49A and Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995²*

What are the Section 75 statutory duties?

Section 75 aims to make a real difference to the lives of people in Northern Ireland through public organisations considering equality and good relations when carrying out all councils functions, such as, when making decisions, developing new policies, or when revising existing ones.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires councils and councillors as the decision makers, to comply with the following two statutory duties:

1. *to have **due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories**³ and*
2. *to have **regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief; political opinion; and racial group***

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive action to promote equality of opportunity between the categories identified in Section 75.

The Equality Commission emphasises that the good relations duty embraces and extends beyond the religious / political dimension of 'community relations'.

Consideration of the needs and interests of all minority ethnic groups is also important in this context. Further Good Relations Guidance for council's is available in Commission guidance: **Good Relations Local Council Advice.pdf** and **Good_Relations-Public_Authorities_Guide.pdf**

What is an 'Equality Scheme'?

A council's equality scheme is a statement of the council's commitment to fulfilling its Section 75 statutory duties. The scheme sets out how the Council is going to ensure that equality and good relations are considered across all functions.

Individuals can raise complaints with councils that an approved equality scheme may not have been complied with and the Commission has the **power to investigate complaints**, if the equality scheme is not implemented effectively. Therefore, councillors should be aware the equality scheme is an important governance and risk document.

What does case law say about complying with the Public Sector Duties?

Councillors may find it helpful to be aware of the following principles, called the Brown principles⁴, when planning their and their council's compliance with the Section 75 duties:

² Section 49A and Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the 'DDA 1995'), (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).

³ *Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without.*

1. *a decision-maker must be aware that he/she is obliged to comply with the public sector duties;*
2. *the duties must be fulfilled before and at the time that a particular decision is being considered, and not afterwards;*
3. *the duties must be exercised in substance, with rigour and an open mind; and not as a “tick boxing” exercise;*
4. *the duties are non-delegable; meaning that it is the actual decision-maker who must comply with the duties, and not some other person;*
5. *the duties are continuing ones;*
6. *it is good practice to keep adequate records that will show that the statutory goals have actually been considered and pondered and to promote transparency and discipline in the decision-making process.*

How can a councillor practically demonstrate effective leadership in regard to their Section 75 obligations?

The leadership and commitment of councillors and council Chief Executives are critical to the successful implementation and achievement of the intended outcomes of the Section 75 duties, and to ensuring that a meaningful and effective approach to implementing the duties is adopted across the council as an organisation.

The Equality Commission has produced leadership guidance to remind decision-makers of what is required to ensure the effective implementation of the Section 75 duties. The guidance can be found at: www.equalityni.org/s75leadership

Some of the practical actions covered in this guidance that councillors and council officers can take to demonstrate Section 75 leadership are:

Good governance:

- be fully aware of and understand the implications of all of the commitments contained in their **equality schemes** and apply the arrangements positively and continuously
- ensure that equality scheme **training** commitments are implemented, including appropriate mandatory training e.g. policymakers who will be undertaking screening/Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA), e.g. Section 75 Training for Councillors.
- ensure compliance with the duties by scrutinising, for example, the quality of **Quarterly screening reports and Section 75 annual progress reports**.

Meaningful equality assessments

- ensure that screening and equality impact assessments are undertaken for **each policy**, as defined in the equality scheme.
- **expect meaningful screening** and EQIA assessments to be presented with each new or revised policy decision, including ‘high level’ or strategic policies. If meaningful equality assessments are not provided with council papers for consideration, then decision makers should **ask for them**.
- the equality assessments should be considered along with the policy proposals, so that decision-makers take

⁴ (Brown) –v- Secretary of State for Work & Pensions & others [2008] EWHC 3158 Case law has determined some principles, commonly known as the Brown principles, from a case of that name⁴ in Great Britain.

These are principles that the courts in Great Britain take account of when assessing compliance with the public sector duties.

the assessments into consideration at the point of decision making i.e. **before a decision is taken**.

- ensure they are satisfied with the **quality and coherence of equality assessments** (screening and/or equality impact assessments (EQIA)) undertaken, ensuring that the assessments are not simply a ‘tick-box’ exercise.

What are the Disability Duties?

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (“DDA”) Section 49A requires councils to:

1. have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, and
2. the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

This duty is supported by an obligation to have a disability action plan⁵.

Councillors should scrutinise council Disability Action Plans (DAPs) to ensure they cover all functions of the Council and contain meaningful actions that will have real outcomes. For further information on the disability duties is available on the Commission’s website at: **ECNI - Disability Duties for Public Authorities - Equality Commission NI**

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (‘FOI 2000’) gives people rights of access to the information held by councils and other public bodies. The legislation aims to give people a better understanding of how organisations make decisions, carry out their duties and spend public money.

The act created two principal obligations for councils:

1. All councils must adopt and maintain a publication scheme setting out details of information they will routinely make available, how the information can be obtained and whether there is a charge for it.
2. All councils must comply with requests made under the Act for information they hold (unless one of the exemptions from disclosure applies). Requests for information should be responded to as quickly as possible and certainly within 20 working days except in some limited circumstances.

As a councillor, the decisions you make and the actions you take are all subject to public scrutiny. Your allowance, along with any expenses you claim, will be published on the council’s website.

Environmental Information

Councils as public authorities are also subject to Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (‘EIR’). The scope of EIR is not restricted just to “green” subjects or information, but extends to land use, planning, transport, waste, energy, agriculture, housing development, public nuisance, and aspects of public health, food safety, buildings maintenance and cultural sites. Environmental information is exempt from release under FOI 2000 and instead more and more information is being released under EIR 2004.

General Data Protection Regulations

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a recent regulation that applies to all countries within the EU. UK domestic law has been updated as a result, with the Data Protection Act 1998 replaced by a new Data Protection Act in 2018. This was commenced on the same day as the GDPR.

⁵ Section 49A and Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the ‘DDA 1995’), (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).

In event of 'Brexit', GDPR will be brought into UK domestic law, by the proposed Withdrawal Bill.

The GDPR sets out requirements for how organisations need to handle personal data. In addition to other changes, it will enhance the rights of people whose data is held (known as data subjects in the Data Protection Act 1998) and give them more control over what happens to their data. The eight protection principles which were in the 1998 legislation have been replaced by six in the new Regulation. These six general principles are very similar to the current law.

Personal information should be:

- *Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner*
- *Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes*
- *Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary*
- *Accurate and where necessary, kept up-to-date*
- *Retained only as long as necessary*
- *Processed in an appropriate manner to maintain security.*

Councillors (as data controllers) are responsible for ensuring all personal data is handled in a way that complies with the principles of GDPR and must be able to demonstrate this to 'data subjects' and the regulator.

Accountability is central to GDPR. It is being referred to as the 7th principle.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website provides useful advice relevant to councillors: <https://ico.org.uk/fororganisations/political>



The role of the Local Government Commissioner for Standards is sometimes confused with that of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman. This is because the roles of the Ombudsman and the Commissioner, although very different, are held by the same person.

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent, and impartial service for handling complaints about public services in Northern Ireland. These include government departments and agencies, councils, social housing providers, schools and Universities, and Health and Social Care Trusts.

People have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if they feel that a public service provider has treated them unfairly, or if they have received a poor service and their complaint to that organisation has not been resolved to their satisfaction.

The Ombudsman can consider complaints about maladministration. The term maladministration is not defined but is generally taken to mean poor administration or the wrong application of rules. The Ombudsman can also consider complaints about professional judgement and clinical decisions which have been made by health and social care professionals.

Some examples that the Ombudsman may regard as maladministration include:

- Avoidable delay
- Faulty procedures or failing to follow the correct procedures
- Not telling someone about any rights of appeal they have
- Unfairness, bias or prejudice
- Giving advice that is misleading or inadequate
- Refusing to answer reasonable questions

- Discourtesy and failure to apologise properly for errors
- Mistakes in handling a complaint

It is important to be aware that any complaints about maladministration within councils would be dealt with by the Ombudsman. Therefore, complaints about alleged maladministration as a result of the actions of council staff, including Chief Executives, would be handled by the Ombudsman and not the Commissioner. The Commissioner only deals with complaints against councillors.

in my advocacy role for people in need. I really enjoy working with people and being a voice for those who are in need of help or support.

I also have a keen interest in mental health issues and I am currently chairperson of the 'Darkness to Light' anti suicide walk which we are running for the first time in this area. My hope for the future of local government is that there will be more unity and that political parties will work together for the greater good of all our communities.

Councillor Viewpoint

Cllr Stephanie Quigley

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

My name is Stephanie Quigley. Before I came into local government, I was a community podiatrist working for the Northern Health Trust and a mum to five of a family. In October 2013, I was co-opted on to the legacy Coleraine council replacing my father after he had served twenty years as an SDLP councillor. I am fortunate to have a great role model and wonderful father who had served all of the community and was held in such high regard. I came into this role as I had the privilege of witnessing the difference that my father had made in the lives of the people he represented and I really wanted to carry on his good work.

In May 2014, I was elected and since then I have worked full time as a councillor. I have really enjoyed bringing projects like Street Pastors to the borough, a cross community project that takes care of our young people out enjoying the night time economy.

I have a keen interest in social and affordable housing and my passion lies

What is The Rural Needs Act?

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a duty on public authorities, including councils, to

- *have “due regard to rural needs when*
 - *“developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies, and plans” and*
 - *“designing and delivering public services”*
- *compile information and report on its activities in both its annual report and to DAERA*
- *And to carry out these duties in line with any guidance or advice set out by DAERA*

Why is it important?

The Act is important because it seeks to ensure a consistent and considered approach to taking account of the needs of people in rural areas when undertaking strategy and policy development, as well as when designing or delivering public services.

It sets out to;

- ensure the consideration of the needs of people in rural areas becomes more firmly embedded within public authorities



The Gobbins, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

- help deliver fairer and more equitable treatment of people in rural areas
- contribute to delivering better outcomes for people in rural areas and help make rural communities more sustainable
- increase transparency, requiring public authorities to compile and publish information on how they comply with the due regard duty when carrying out certain activities and for this information to be published in an annual report.

The Act imposes the duty to have due regard to rural needs on public authorities. councils must comply with this duty, otherwise they are in breach of their legal responsibilities.

What are the implications for councils?

The Act applies to all councils in NI, as well as to their statutory Community Planning partners. It took effect for councils from 1st June 2017.

DAERA have provided **guidance** on how organisations may comply with the Act. This includes a **template** for a Rural Needs Impact Assessment, which it recommends should be completed, reviewed and approved for

each policy, strategy, or plan that is being developed, adopted, implemented or revised, as well as when designing and delivering public services.

The Rural Needs Impact Assessment template should be completed by council staff responsible for the policy, strategy, plan, or service review or delivery planning. In many cases the information and analysis required to complete the template will already be available. Where it is not, the template will act as a prompt to staff to review their processes so that they can provide answers to all aspects of the template.

As those responsible for the overall governance of the organisation, elected members must therefore satisfy themselves, when considering and approving any action by council to which the Act should apply, that the council has fulfilled its statutory duty.

As elected representatives, and when nominated by council to other committees and other bodies, councillors may also have a role to play, acting on behalf of their constituents, in considering the activities of other statutory bodies, and whether they have complied with the terms of the Act as part of their decision-making process.



Beaghmore Stone Circles, Mid Ulster District Council

How do you take account of Rural Needs?

The Act requires organisations to have “due regard” to rural needs. The Rural Needs Impact Assessment template is provided to help staff consider and assess what this means in any given scenario.

Detailed guidance has been made available by DAERA to support organisations and individuals to understand and interpret the requirements of the Act, and to guide them through the completion of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment template.

A key aspect of this guidance is the interpretation of what the duty requires of organisations; what having “due regard” means. It DOES NOT mean that everyone should have EQUAL access to services or policy impacts, but rather that, where there

may be a negative differential impact for those people in rural areas, these are identified and addressed within the development process.

What support is available to help?

DAERA have made detailed guidance available on their website including “A Guide to The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised) including the Rural Needs Impact Assessment template, a set of Frequently Asked Questions, and a sample of case study material on completing the template and addressing the duties established under the Act.

Staff within DAERA are also available to answer specific questions on the Act, should there be anything not covered within the guidance, however, it will remain the responsibility of each organisation to ensure that it complies with its legal duties.

Staff within each council will be identified with a lead role and responsibility for the co-ordination, monitoring and reporting of council performance in complying with the Act.

These nominated individuals will also be able to offer further advice to both staff and councillors, in support of their role and areas of responsibility. They may also act as the key organisational contact with DAERA in order to facilitate ongoing networking and information exchange activities (raising queries or issues on behalf of their council and receiving information on best practice approaches and solutions to common queries).

Ombudsman. Therefore, complaints about council staff, including Chief Executives, would be handled by the Ombudsman and not the Commissioner. The Commissioner only deals with complaints against councillors.

Tackling Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking is happening in Northern Ireland.

During the 2018/19 financial year, the PSNI's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit investigated 59 potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking recovered in Northern Ireland who were referred to the National Recovery Mechanism (NRM). The NRM is the national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring that they receive the appropriate support.

The total of 59 potential victims included 30 males and 29 females. A total of 22 referrals to the NRM were for potential victims of sexual exploitation, 24 for labour exploitation, 9 for criminal exploitation, and 4 where the type of exploitation was unknown. Fifteen referrals were for cases of exploitation while the potential victims were children.

Through your role as an elected member, you are well positioned to recognise the signs of modern slavery in your local constituencies.

The Department of Justice Campaign "Modern Slavery is closer than you think", which is being taken forward in partnership with local councils, the emergency services, public,

private and civil sector organisations provides an overview of the signs to look out for. Further details about Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking can be found at the following link:

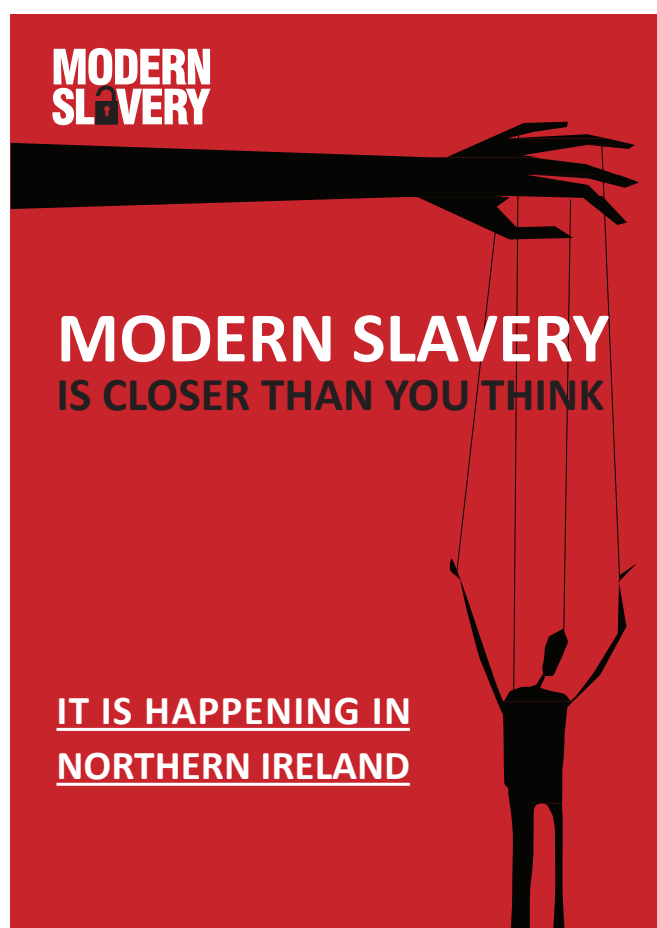
www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/human-trafficking

Councils can help effectively stamp out trafficking and modern slavery in Northern Ireland through actively engaging with these issues in their roles in Community Planning, PCSPs, regulation of HMOs (from 1st April 2019), and public facing functions including environmental health; building control and waste collection.

NILGA is currently working with the Department of Justice to develop a Council Guide for Tackling Modern Slavery

If you suspect that someone has been trafficked or enslaved:

- call 999 in an emergency
- call 101 about a general situation
- call 0800 0121 700 for the Modern Slavery Helpline.



The ScamwiseNI Partnership was established in November 2016 and its aim is to educate and inform the public on how to stay one step ahead of scammers and fraudsters. The Partnership now has over 30 organisations involved including representatives from financial institutions, charities, youth organisations, government departments, housing associations, churches and retailers, among others.

If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam

Stay 4 steps ahead of a scam by using the **scam test**

for help and information or to report a scam visit:

nidirect.gov.uk/scamwiseni

 ScamwiseNI

scamwiseNI
PARTNERSHIP

Scams are one of the most distressing crimes that are committed. It is a crime that is very low-risk for the fraudster, with victims sometimes losing thousands of pounds or in many cases all their life savings. More money is lost to scams than to burglaries, as scammers are often able to completely empty a bank account. In Northern Ireland, hundreds of thousands of pounds are lost to scams every month.

Approximately 32% * of consumers in Northern Ireland have been targeted by a scam in the last three years, and this is just the ones that have been reported. One of the initiatives the ScamwiseNI Partnership has developed is the 'Nevers.' It is a list of actions that genuine organisations,

such as financial institutions and public bodies, will never do in the course of their dealings with the public... For example, recently a woman was contacted by a scammer claiming to represent her telecoms provider about broadband speed issues. In a phone call which lasted approximately three hours, [she was persuaded to give the scammer access to her computer.

The woman was convinced to perform a series of actions on the computer, including logging onto her online banking. This gave the scammers access to her bank account and resulted in her losing almost £65,000. The "Nevers" state that a genuine telecoms provider will never call out of the blue to ask for access to your computer.

Remember: financial institutions, utility companies, law enforcement, HMRC, internet & telecoms providers or other public bodies:

Will **NEVER** ask for payment vouchers.

Will **NEVER** ask you to transfer money because your account is compromised.

Will **NEVER** threaten you over the phone, by letter or email for not paying a fee.

Will **NEVER** threaten arrest if payment isn't made immediately.

Will **NEVER** ask for money for a 'free gift', 'admin fee' or as part of a promotion.

Will **NEVER** ask to reveal your account security codes or online passwords in full.

Will **NEVER** call out of the blue and ask for remote access to your computer or devices or to download software.

Will **NEVER** inform you about tax returns by email, text or voicemail.

“Another project that the ScamwiseNI Partnership has developed is the Little Book of Big Scams. The latest edition of the book outlines many of the scams that are used against people. It provides advice and guidance on how to protect yourself, and where you can go for assistance. This is available to read online and free to take from ScamwiseNI Partnership buildings across Northern Ireland.

www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/crime/fraud/scamwise/final-psni_lbobs_fourth-edition_online.pdf

It is important to remember that scammers are smart, and adept at impersonating organisations and officials that are legitimate. People need to be on their guard against them and know how to recognise the signs. The ScamwiseNI Partnership has developed the “scam test” as a 1 rule of thumb that

people should follow to identify scams. The ScamwiseNI Partnership operates a Facebook page that is updated daily with examples of the latest scams.

Check it out @**ScamwiseNI**

NI Direct have a scam section with detailed examples of prevalent scams and how to protect yourself. Visit: www.nidirect.gov.uk/scamwiseni for more information.

The Post Office now offers the “Scam? Ask Us” service, where people can go to their local Post Office and ask staff there for guidance if they have received a phone call, letter, or email, that they think might be a scam.

***Consumer Council Research - Figures from ‘Consumer Insight Survey’ commissioned by The Consumer Council carried out by YouGov, February 2019.*

Stay 4 steps ahead of a scam by using this **scam test**

Seems too good to true

Contacted out of the blue

Asks for personal details

Money is requested



ScamwiseNI

nidirect.gov.uk/scamwiseni



William Orbinson QC

The proper approach to planning officer reports

In the first of a series of concise legal updates for Members, William Orbinson QC discusses what the Courts will expect from the officer's report to the Planning Committee.

With the return of planning powers to local Councils, the officer's report has been elevated to be of central importance to properly-informed planning decisions. Recent pronouncements from the Courts reject the tendency to dissect a report line-by-line, word-by-word, when determining whether Members have been properly informed by the report. So, in *Mansell v Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Others* [2017] EWHC 2832 (Admin), Lord Justice Lindblom warned against "excessive legalism infecting the planning system", and set out the principles that apply to criticism of a planning officer's report:

"Planning officers' reports ... are not to be read with undue rigour, but with reasonable benevolence, and bearing in mind that they are written for councillors with local knowledge ... The question for the court will always be whether, on a fair reading of the report as a whole, the officer has materially misled the members on a matter bearing upon their decision, and the error has gone uncorrected before the decision was made. Minor or inconsequential errors may be excused. It is only if the advice in the officer's report is such as to misdirect the members in a material way - so that, but for the flawed advice it was given, the committee's decision would or might have been different - that the court will be able to conclude that the decision itself was rendered unlawful by that advice. Where the line is drawn between an officer's advice that is significantly or seriously misleading - misleading in a material way - and advice that is misleading but not significantly so will always depend on the context and circumstances in which the advice was given, and on the possible consequences of it ... But unless there is some distinct and material defect in the officer's advice, the court will not interfere".

In this jurisdiction, the *Mansell* approach was cited with approval and applied in *Alexander v Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council* [2018] NIQB 55, where Mr Justice McCloskey also stressed that the report was not to be viewed in isolation, but rather in the round with all the relevant evidence. The Judge took essentially the same approach in *Conlon v Belfast City Council* [2018] NIQB 49.

With an exclusive specialism in planning and related environmental law issues, William Orbinson QC began his career doing local government planning, environmental and public law work, publishing his 'Local Government Planning Functions in Northern Ireland' through the Local Government Training Group back in the mid-1990's. He spends his time providing planning and environmental advice, and representing Councils and the private sector in major planning inquiries, local development plan independent examinations, appeals, enforcement appeals, prosecutions, and judicial reviews. The sole Northern Ireland Associate of PEBA: The Specialist Bar Association for Planning, the Environment and Local Government, Mr Orbinson is a Legal Associate of the Royal Town Planning Institute and an Affiliate of the Irish Planning Institute. Chair of the Northern Ireland Planning Bar Association, and founding member, past Chair, and Committee Member of the Environmental and Planning Law Association for Northern Ireland, he is the author of the main NI texts on local government planning functions, planning appeals, planning policy, enforcement, and judicial review.



3

Place Shaping

*Shaping places to promote
social, economic and
environmental wellbeing*

Part 3

Understanding your role in Place Shaping

Place shaping refers to your councils strategic leadership role in coordinating how places are governed and how they will be shaped as they evolve over time. This approach involves you, as a councillor, working with your council officers and citizens, and external partners, to co-produce a wide range of decisions, services and programmes across a locality to nurture better places with enhanced services. The aim of which is to promote the general wellbeing of citizens, their local economy and their surrounding environment.

International and national trends, particularly around technological change, shifts towards outcomes (conditions for wellbeing) and the changing nature of public service provision, indicate, now more than ever, how local authorities play a key role in shaping their local places and communities (Place Shaping). In Northern Ireland, this place shaping approach is crucial for the current and future role of local government in improving local service delivery and the design of places to meet the wellbeing needs of communities. Wellbeing is about quality of life, people's living and working conditions, the quality of services people experience, and reflects whether our society is becoming more sustainable and resilient. Drawing on Scottish vocabulary, wellbeing is about creating 'flourishing communities', those where neighbours look out for each other, people have pride and satisfaction with where they live and feel able to influence decisions about their area. Residents are able to access open and shared environments, and avail of quality green and blue spaces, feel safe going out and there are places and opportunities that bring people together. For further reading on wellbeing, the Carnegie UK

Trust published, in March 2015, the Towards a Wellbeing Framework which detailed findings from the roundtable on measuring wellbeing in Northern Ireland ¹.

As democratically elected local representatives, councillors like you are in a unique and privileged position to make a real difference to people's lives. One of the reasons that you became a councillor is because you care about your area. Caring about people and places requires you to appreciate – and engage with – place shaping functions in council for improving local wellbeing outcomes. A councils Local Development Planning and Community Planning powers are two core place shaping processes, alongside it's corporate planning responsibility for improving performance management.

Local Government administration in Northern Ireland is undergoing an 'improvement journey' set within the context of rationalisation and reform of public service delivery across the devolved UK. This improvement journey requires councils to measure the impact of its duties and functions on people's wellbeing, in terms of performance outcomes, and making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions to achieve strategic effectiveness, better service quality and nurture innovation. In parallel, there is a shift towards achieving alignment across our public service provision through better policy integration and collaborative working, coupled with new thinking around co-production (working collaboratively, not separately) and outcomes (focusing on impact, not inputs or outputs). NILGA, your all council body, wants to see councils and government working with local people in a relational, not a transactional, manner.

¹ Carnegie Trust (March 2015) *Towards a Wellbeing Framework*

All councils are responsible for the delivery of many plans, such as the Community Plan, Local Development Plan, Corporate Plan or Performance Improvement Plan (Figure 1). These plans must be aligned and connected to each other. Ideally the overarching outcomes and priorities within the Community Plan (service delivery), Local Development Plan (spatial vision) and Corporate Plan are effectively “cascaded” across the organisation, so that everyone knows where they fit in and how they contribute to achieving these shared outcomes and priorities.

These local government planning processes should work together, not work in isolation, and Figure 1 illustrates the connection between the regional and local policy landscape.

Figure 1: Strategic Landscape



This section of the guide will describe and explain three key planning functions (Community Planning, Local Development Planning and Performance Improvement) and related activities (such as Regeneration, Leisure, Culture/Arts and Economic & Tourism Development) in council which elected members should think of as a ‘place shaping toolkit’ and how involvement in – and making the connections between – these functions will enable you and your community to fully participate in shaping places and improving wellbeing in your council area. In doing so, the subsections below will consider each planning function, why each one is important, how each one operates, how some are statutorily connected, and what support is available for you as elected members.

Community Planning

Community Planning offers an innovative way to consider how public services are co-designed and co-delivered. Whilst council is the hub of this, many other government departments and agencies, as well as the business, community and voluntary sector, must play their part in community planning to work together with communities to plan and deliver better services. Community Planning identifies the priorities and sets the vision for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of districts and the people who live there for achieving sustainable development.

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the council to initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate in community planning for its district. The council is the lead partner and is required to put in place a process of collaboration through a Community Planning Partnership, comprising the council, statutory partners and the wider community, including the voluntary and community sector, to

develop and implement a shared vision for promoting wellbeing of its area, community cohesion and improving the quality of life of its citizens.

The structure of the community planning partnerships and the areas they cover vary – depending on the size and geography of the area, socio-demographic factors, the local economy and local political priorities – but they all have in common the need to collaborate in the delivery of community planning in their area.

The Community Plan is the overarching wellbeing plan for each council area and provides direction to other plans, initiatives and partnerships. Being co-produced between council and partners, the Community Plan is written and implemented by the Community Planning Partnership, with meaningful engagement with local communities. The high-level output of community planning – the Community Plan – is based on evidence gathered by the council and sets out the strategic vision and wellbeing outcomes for a council area. Subsequent action/delivery plans set out what will be required to achieve the vision and wellbeing outcomes, working within the opportunities and constraints of the evidence and information from the community on their aspirations for their streets, neighbourhoods and communities.

Why is Community Planning Important?

Community planning is a significant and ambitious long-term collaborative opportunity aimed at improving people's lives, strengthening the economy and creating more resilient environments.

Community Planning is about getting the right services in the right places linked to the people who need them. Fundamentally, Community planning is about sustainable development – balancing the economic, environmental and social impacts of service needs.

Elected members are well placed to identify and understand needs, priorities and strategic actions for their area. Acting as direct links between council and citizens, councillors work with officers to inform and guide the community planning process and help to access and engage the right people. Also, elected members can ensure that the wellbeing priorities, outcomes and delivery actions established are clear, meaningful, relevant and, most importantly, seek to address the things that matter most in the local areas.

How to do it

The community planning process involves engagement and partnership working. It is about collaboratively identifying the priorities and setting a vision for the area that will improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of districts and the people who live there. This can be at a very strategic level through outcomes, such as residents with good jobs, or at a programme level, such as how customers are better off when the initiative works the way it should, e.g. the percentage increase of people in a skills development programme who get and keep good paying jobs. All improvements, no matter how big or small, eventually add up to become major improvements over time helping to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of districts.

The Department for Communities' Guidance explains that from the outset the community planning process should set out to achieve the following ²:

- *A baseline of existing conditions in the council area which includes an equality / good relations analysis or enables the council to fulfil its equality scheme commitment to future monitoring requirements;*
- *An integrated view of the social, economic and environmental needs of the area in the context of regional, national and European policies and strategies, and taking in to account communities and issues that extend into neighbouring council areas and jurisdictions;*
- *A long-term vision for the future;*
- *A set of outcomes (conditions of wellbeing) against which progress can be monitored and evaluated; and*
- *A clear focus on delivering in the short to medium term to achieve the long term visions.*

Getting Involved and Accessing Support

Each of the 11 district councils in Northern Ireland has their own committee structures for progressing community planning. As a councillor, you should use the following points to help you consider how you can get involved and access support:

1. *Ensure that you are clear about your role and are able to explain it to others.*

2. *Get involved. Talk to your residents and organisations linked to your local area and help them become aware of community planning.*
3. *Elected members engaged in community planning structures are well positioned to provide a deeper understanding (provide greater context to 'the story') of local areas they represent, which is vital for designing impactful solutions to some of the complex issues that communities are dealing with.*
4. *Work in partnership with your officers and apply constructive challenge when necessary.*

Outcomes-based accountability (OBA)

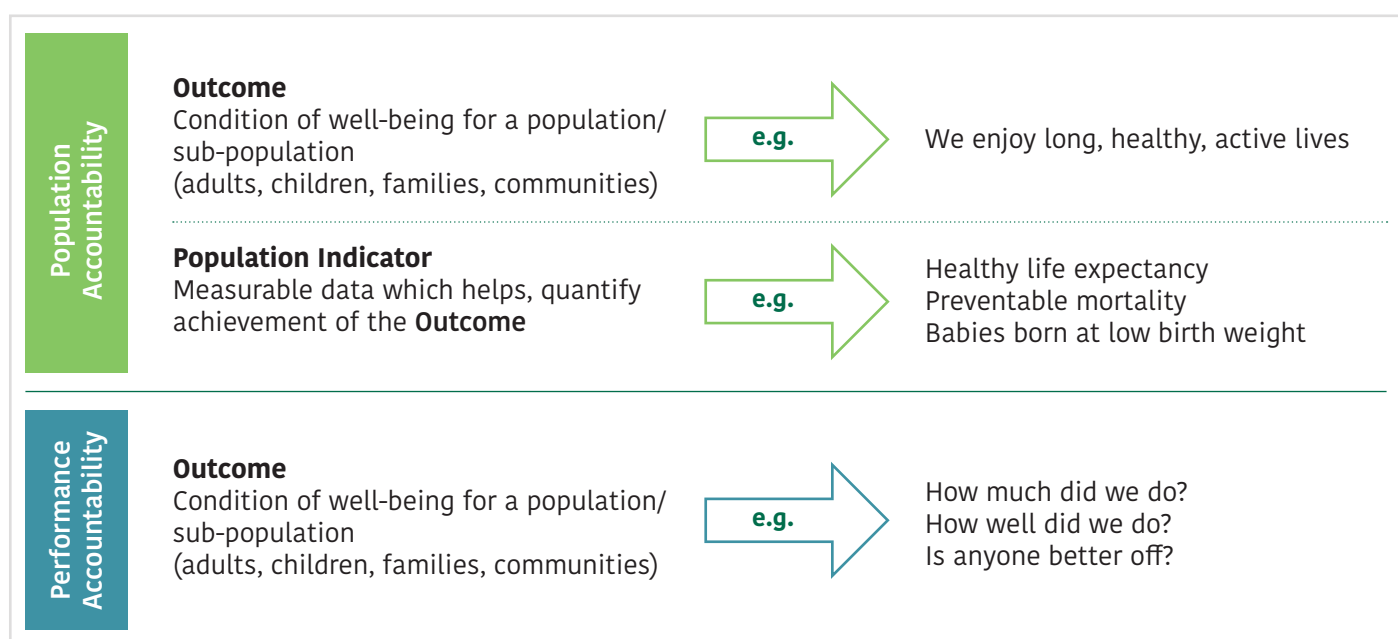
Outcomes-based accountability is the approach to planning and monitoring impact that underpins the draft Programme for Government (PfG). As community plans need to relate to the PfG it is useful to be aware of OBA. OBA is a straightforward way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve the quality of life (wellbeing) in communities at a population level as well as performance at a programme level. For communities (population accountability), outcomes are conditions of wellbeing, such as residents with good jobs and children ready for school. Remember, for programmes (performance accountability), outcomes are how customers are better off when the project works the way it should, such as the percentage increase of people participating in preventative health measures in a community, reducing illness and staying healthy.

² Department for Communities (July 2018) Monitoring and Reporting Guidance

There are two clear and distinct levels of impact identified above which can be illustrated as follows (and illustrated in Fig. 2):

- **Population accountability (1):** for outcomes which are the conditions of wellbeing we want for children, families and the community as a whole – for example ‘our people are healthy and well – physically mentally and emotionally’.
- **Outcomes** need long-term and inter-agency responses. Because they are complex, they cannot be measured directly, but are tracked by indicators.
- **Performance accountability (2):** for the work of individual agencies, programmes and projects deliver actions designed to contribute to outcomes. Performance accountability is tracked through performance measures.
- **Performance measures:** capture the quantity and quality of the work, through three measures that ask ‘How much did we do?’ ‘How well did we do it?’ and ‘Is anybody better off?’

Figure 2: an illustration of Population and Performance Accountability in Outcomes-based approaches to Community Planning



OBA aims to address the big issues affecting districts, requiring joined-up multi-agency working and recognising that improving outcomes can take a long time to change.

Outcomes-based accountability can help community planning partnerships identify clear priorities for their area and measure how they are going to meet these. Through community planning processes, OBA allows for better alignment of regional and local priorities. It is important that community planning partnerships are clear about their priorities, can direct resources to them, and then gather the right information to assess whether their actions are making a difference in improving services and delivering better outcomes for local people.

³ Department for Communities (July 2018) Community Planning Monitoring and Reporting Guidance

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Further information is available at: www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy_legislation.htm

The Department for Communities' guidance indicates that Community Planning Partnerships, in contributing to outcomes, will need to demonstrate and report regularly on actions - what was done, how well it was done and is anyone better off (i.e. outcomes that positively change the conditions of people's wellbeing). Regular monitoring of the interventions and actions from delivery plans needs to be carried out throughout the lifetime of the action identified. Community Planning Partnerships therefore have to define and agree key principles on monitoring and evaluating in order to report.

Planning

In addition to Community Planning, councils have primary responsibility for the implementation of local development planning processes, sometimes referred to as land use planning or spatial planning. Irrespective of the different titles currently in use, the Planning Act (NI) 2011 establishes that planning must secure the orderly and consistent development of land, working to do so in the public interest. Since 2015, councils have responsibility for the following key planning functions:

- *Local plan-making (Local Development Plan - LDP) – sometimes referred to as 'forward planning';*
- *Development management (excluding regionally significant applications)*
- *Planning enforcement*

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) retains responsibility for planning legislation, regional policy, and the determination of regionally significant and called-in applications. It also provides oversight and guidance for councils, and performance management functions.

Comprehensive guidance on the Planning system is available in the **NILGA Councillors' Guide to the Northern Ireland Planning System**.

Why is planning important?

Planning is about creating sustainable development and creating resilient communities. In short, planning tries to get the right things built in the right places. Planning tries to include other policy areas (e.g. social justice, housing, job creation, regeneration and climate change) into local development plans (forward planning) to better inform later decisions on planning applications. Fundamentally, planning is about balancing the economic, environmental and social impacts of new development.

Finding this balance is what makes a planner's job challenging, yet very rewarding.

Hopefully you and your community will want to be materially involved in what planning can do for your council area. If you sit on your Council's planning committee you will be tasked with assessing the different benefits and impacts of applications, weighing up these considerations against regional policy and the policies in your published local development plan (LDP).

Even if you don't sit on a planning committee, you will still have a key role to play in supporting your residents to engage in the planning process. So, it is vital that you have a sound understanding of the planning system and any changes that take place.

Often, the only time residents and businesses encounter the planning system is when they, or their neighbours, want to do something to their property – at the planning application stage.

This is quite late in the overall planning process, as it is the plan-making stage (Local Development Plan) that sets out how the council sees the area developing over a 10-15 year period and outlines the policies against which individual proposals will be assessed.

If you and your community really want to influence the future of the area, the local development plan is a good place to start to get engaged in how this plan will set out what you want your local area to look like and include in future.

How to do it (Land Use Planning – The Local Development Plan)

In technical terms land use / spatial / development planning is the regulation and forward management of land development in the public interest, linking with other sectors. e.g. local service delivery (community planning), regeneration and economic development, furthering sustainable development and promoting wellbeing.

The local development plan process aims to move away from a narrow land use focus towards a ‘place shaping’ approach which incorporates how other policies influence the spatial configuration of places, the interaction between people and places, and the services people can access in various places.

The Local Development Plan (LDP) is written and implemented by the council in close consultation with the community. The high-level part, the ‘Plan Strategy’, is based on evidence gathered by the council and sets out the strategic vision and objectives for the area. The plan will set out the desired policies that will guide future investment and planning decisions for working to achieve the vision.

The LDP for your council will be comprised of more than one document, including the Plan Strategy, a series of development plan documents (DPDs) and a Local Policies Plan.

The whole process involves engagement and partnership working with other council services, voluntary and community organisations, businesses, neighbouring authorities and statutory consultees such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Transport NI and NI Water.

Getting Involved and Accessing Support

Each of the 11 district councils in Northern Ireland has a planning committee, which is charged with approval and oversight of the local development plan prior to full council ratification, as well as consideration of, and decision on, planning applications and enforcement of planning controls.

As a councillor, you should use the following points to help you consider how you can get involved and access support:

1. *Ensure that you are clear about your role and are able to explain it to others.*
2. *Get involved. Talk to your residents and local businesses and help them become more aware of planning structures and its purpose.*
3. *Find out the timescale and status of your Council's Local Development Plan and note any emerging themes.*
4. *Work in partnership with your officers and apply constructive challenge when necessary.*

5. *Whilst complying with standards like the Code of Conduct, work with developers, other stakeholders and officers to ensure sustainable local benefits from new development.*
6. *Understand the implications of the Planning (NI) Act 2011 and the Local Government NI Act 2014, and the opportunities for your council area and your neighbourhood.*

The council's planning committee operates according to a protocol, which works in synergy with its Standing Orders and Code of Conduct for Councillors. Each council has drafted and approved its own protocol for operation of its planning committee. It is recommended, whether you are a member of the planning committee or not, that you fully familiarise yourself with the content of your local protocol.

Councillor Viewpoint

Cllr Robert Irvine

(Fermanagh and Omagh District Council)

My first venture into representative politics was during the Local Government elections in 2001, when to my surprise, and delight, I was elected to Fermanagh District Council. Since then I have remained as a representative in local politics and now sit on the re-formed Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

Politics forms a large part of my working week, however when not engaged in the political arena, I am involved in the construction industry working in property as a quantity surveyor/project manager/property developer. Construction is a very fulfilling profession and I have been privileged to work on many projects over the years that have challenged and developed me, on a personal level. The skills and core competencies developed through this work have better equipped me for my role as a councillor, and I have developed an interest and expertise in related matters such as planning and land use.

NILGA as well as being the voice of Local Government also provide

support and training modules for councillors. The recently developed ILM (Endorsed Award) NILGA Local Planning Leadership Programme has proved to be an excellent platform to enhance and widen the knowledge and skill base of participants. The interactive nature of the course allowed learning by instruction, participation and sharing of experiences by all of those involved. The content was pitched at the right level and covered the complete range of subject matter that councillors need to have knowledge of and be competent in. It highlighted the serious nature of the work and how it related to Community Planning.

I found that through participation in the course my own appreciation of, and competence in, the area of planning and related subject matter has greatly increased. For those wanting to broaden their horizons in planning it is a must do activity. I would recommend it to anyone as I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Looking forward, the course has helped me to be more confident not only in planning matters, but as a councillor in general, allowing me to better fulfil the role for my community.

Place-Shaping – a way to link local development planning and community planning

The new style of local development plans provides a unique opportunity for a council to genuinely shape places for local communities - and nurture a more joined-up approach to place shaping, incorporating linkages to other planning processes, such as community planning and regeneration, and investment decisions.

To positively influence the future of your area – and shape place – a good understanding of wellbeing provides a way to better link the everyday experiences and priorities of people with the sometimes remote and often opaque world of policy making and politics.

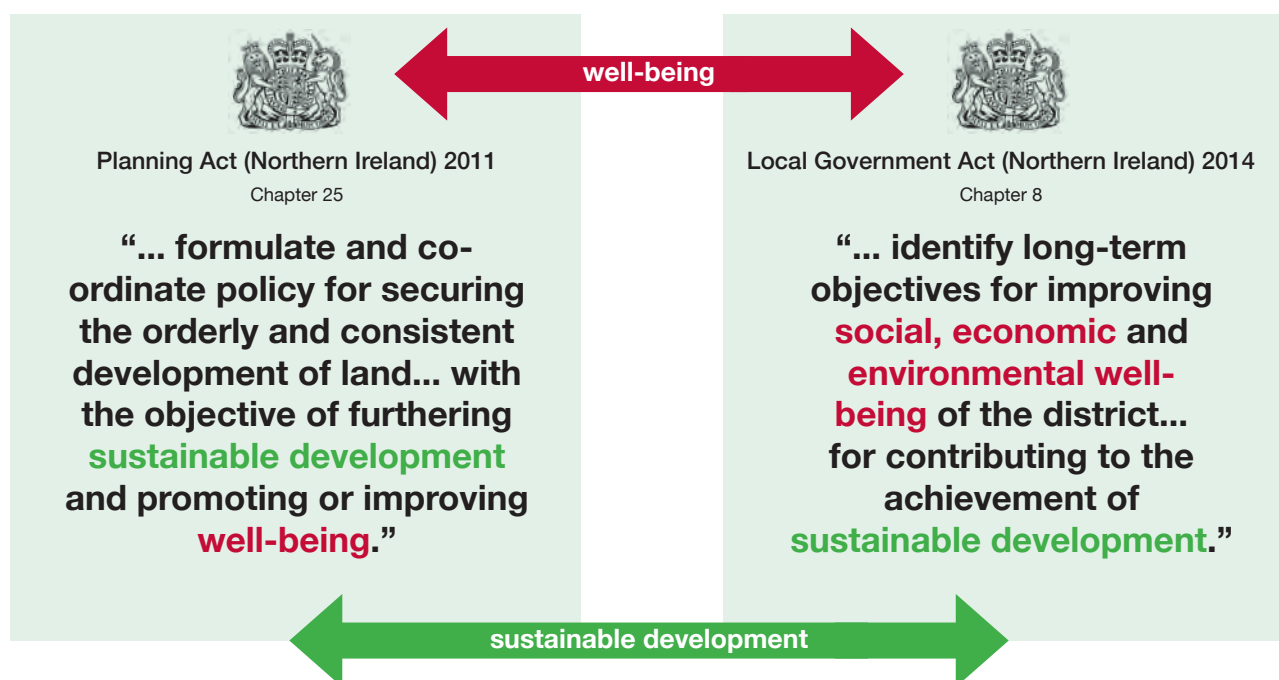
Wellbeing provides an outcome-based way that focusses on how people and communities are doing. Thinking about wellbeing and using

outcomes provides a framework to consider the added value of services, by focussing on how services make people's lives better and the district more prosperous and liveable.

Wellbeing is understood as creating conditions for citizens to enjoy long, healthy, creative and valued lives (such as health, meaningful and rewarding work, social relationships, access to a healthy environment, tackling inequalities and promoting a sustainable economy).

As illustrated in Figure 3, extracts from the legislation framing local development planning and community planning indicate that both planning processes have shared goals of achieving sustainable development and improving wellbeing. Working towards these shared outcomes require everyone, including elected members, to consider how decisions in each planning regime – and how alignment across these planning functions – enhance social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Figure 3: Local Development (Land Use/Spatial) Planning & Community Planning



(Source: Rafferty, 2018) ⁶

The Local Government (NI) Act 2014 introduced and amended the Planning Act (NI) 2011 to include, a statutory link between both planning processes – the first of its kind in the UK⁷. This requires councils to take account of their Community Plan (service delivery) when preparing their Local Development Plan (spatial vision). The local development plan provides the spatial strategy for the community plan, flowing from the vision for the council area and its communities and linking public and private sector investment through the land use planning system.

Figure 4 illustrates how both planning functions overlap to focus on creating sustainable development and improving wellbeing outcomes, with community planning being people-centred in delivering appropriate and necessary public services, and local development planning being place-based in appropriately guiding decisions on the natural and built environment. The creation of these plans require engagement with a wide range of stakeholders across government, private sector and civic society.

Figure 4: Statutorily Connected Plans for furthering Sustainable Development and improving wellbeing



(Source: Rafferty, 2018)⁸

⁶ Extract from Dr Gavan Rafferty's presentation, *Local Development Planning, Community Planning and Regeneration*, part of NILGA's Local Planning Programme for Elected Members (May 2018).

⁷ For further information on creating a constructive interface between community planning and land use (spatial) planning is available from Dr Gavan Rafferty's Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS) presentation and policy briefing at: <https://kess.org.uk/2013/11/28/creating-constructive-interface-community-planning-land-use-spatial-planning/>

⁸ Extract from Dr Gavan Rafferty's presentation, *Local Development Planning, Community Planning and Regeneration*, part of NILGA's Local Planning Programme for Elected Members (May 2018).



Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Successful programming of community planning and local development planning activities to ensure both processes are working towards their shared legislative goals require:

- *Understanding of regional policy context and objectives (e.g. PfG outcomes, Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018-19, Regional Development Strategy 2035; etc.)*
- *Place-based working that adopts an asset-based approach to highlight the strengths, capacity and knowledge of all those involved in both community planning and local development planning.*
- *Working together (across citizens,*

council staff, elected members) to gain local knowledge and insight, make best use of available resources and to maximise collaborate gain.

- *Nurturing alignment between vision (plans), activities (decisions/ actions) and outcomes (impact).*

The need for close alignment between these two processes, as captured in current legislation, provides councils with powerful place-shaping responsibilities to deliver better public services and healthier places for people to live, work and enjoy. The places where people live and work have a significant role on people experiencing positive or negative social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Performance Improvement

The Legislation

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a general duty of improvement for local government, whereby all councils must put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. To meet this duty, councils are required to:

- *Set and publish improvement objectives through the annual Performance Improvement Plan*
- *Monitor and report progress in achieving these objectives and complying with the general duty of improvement through the annual self-assessment report.*

The Northern Ireland Audit Office carried out an Annual Performance Audit and Assessment to determine whether each council has complied with part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and is on track to deliver improvements in the future.

Performance Improvement – Why Is It Important?

Local government is increasingly faced with delivering services with less money. Effectively managing performance can be used as a tool to modernise and transform services, and turn the vision Elected Members have for their communities into tangible outcomes and benefits for all.

Robust and reliable performance management arrangements enable Elected Members to assess whether the Council is achieving what it set out to achieve in the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan and

other key plans and strategies. Accurate and meaningful performance information can assist you in making informed decisions about how things are, in order to make things better. Performance management therefore provides you with an opportunity to take positive action and translate strategic priorities into meaningful results.

Elected members are well placed to identify, understand and anticipate opportunities in Districts, acting as a direct link between the Council and its citizens, work with officers to promote and participate in consultations and help to access and engage the right people. Also, elected members can ensure that the priorities and objectives set are clear, meaningful, relevant and most importantly seek to address the things that matter most in the local area. Ultimately you make the final decision regarding the strategic direction of the Council.

Effective performance management can deliver significant improvement and Elected Members can play a role by challenging, probing and questioning how this can be achieved. Whilst your Council may have the systems in place to support the process of performance management, ultimately, it is the organisational culture and the creativity and commitment of staff that will deliver the greatest improvements to the local area.

The process for Performance Improvement typically follows 3 key stages:

- *Plan*
- *Monitor*
- *Improve*

How to do it

Elected Members have an important role to play throughout each stage of the process:

Plan

- *Making sure the needs of citizens and the challenges they face are taken into consideration when developing the Council's policies, plans and strategies.*
- *Helping to identify clear, meaningful and relevant priority areas, where performance should be improved.*

Monitor

- *Using performance information to monitor, review and scrutinise progress in delivering key plans and strategies, challenging areas of under-performance and recognising where performance is better than anticipated.*
- *Comparing performance, identifying good practice and learning from others.*

Improve

- *Making key decisions in response to what the performance information is highlighting. This might include addressing under-performance by taking corrective action through revising plans, re-allocating resources and identifying improvement activity that will have a positive impact on local services, local areas and local communities.*
- *Integrating learning and improvement into a continuous cycle of performance management, using the information to plan ahead and deliver efficient and effective services that meet the needs of local communities.*

Getting Involved and Accessing Support

Many Elected Members sit on council committees which are responsible for managing and overseeing the performance of specific Directorates within each Council

and the respective services and programmes of work. As a councillor you will work with officers to ensure efficient and effective delivery of these services / programmes and to identify where improvements need to be made.

Questions to ask when reviewing performance

- *Why is performance at the current level?*
- *Are we achieving our targets and meeting priorities?*
- *What are the challenges in achieving X level of performance?*
- *What will happen if we don't meet our targets?*
- *How does our performance compare with others and over time?*
- *How can we make sure things get better?*
- *How can performance be improved?*
- *What can we learn from this?*
- *What is the impact on the citizen?*

By asking these questions, Elected Members will send out a clear signal that performance and improvement are being taken seriously at the highest level of the organisation.

In addition to this, each Council has some form of a Scrutiny Committee, that is charged specifically with monitoring; assessing; and reviewing Council's performance in line with the Council's annual Performance Improvement Plan.

In scrutinising whether or not the Councils Performance Improvement Objectives are being achieved, the Scrutiny Committee Members may consider the following:

1. *Is improvement demonstrated? Have indicators /milestones /targets been achieved?*

2. *Where is the evidence to demonstrate the improvement for year-end reports over previous quarter?*
3. *How does performance compare with the previous period?*
4. *If performance has fallen over 2 consecutive periods, what intervention has been made to get the objective back on track?*
5. *What internal governance is in place to ensure delivery of the objectives?*

Elected members act as a bridge between the Council and the community, balancing many different roles which means you are well placed to draw on your experience to help build high performing organisations that are well led, well organised with a can-do culture and focussed on making life better for local communities.

Regeneration

Regeneration, as defined in the Department for Communities framework ¹⁰, is described as:

‘activities that reverse the economic, social and physical decline in areas where market forces will not do this without the support of government’.

Economic – strengthen the local economy and create wealth by tackling worklessness and promoting job creation. It also aims to change behaviour, encouraging and supporting people to become more entrepreneurial.

Social – improving conditions for communities and neighbourhoods through creating safer environments and better co-ordinating public services.

Physical – improving the physical fabric of buildings and the public realm to create attractive, safe and sustainable places in which to live, work and visit.

Regeneration powers were to formally transfer to councils in 2015. However, the Department still retains regeneration powers. Councils are already materially involved in regeneration in their districts, and their existing activity can be enhanced through use of the General Power of Competence – a legislative power to assist economic and infrastructure development - and related legislation. Like Community Planning and Local Development Planning, regeneration is a key element of place shaping, so to maximise impact it is important that regeneration activities, which councils are involved in, are aligned to outcomes in other plans (e.g. Community Plan and Local Development Plan).

It is intended, however, that if the transfer of regeneration powers takes place, the overall suite of complementary community planning, land use and regeneration powers will be combined more effectively to enhance the impact councils can have in shaping, attracting and retaining investment for their areas, and consequently improving local environmental, economic and social wellbeing, as is the case in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

Enterprise and Local Economic Development

Economic development is a statutory role for councils, since April 2015. In practice, councils have been actively encouraging economic development through funding and support programmes for business since the 1990s.

¹⁰ Department for Social Development (2013) Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework

Why is Enterprise & Local Economic Development important?

Councils face a number of economic challenges, including low levels of economic activity, globalisation and global trends, skills issues and low levels of investment in transport and telecoms infrastructure. These issues are addressed through Community Plans, Economic Development Strategies and Local Development Plans.

How to do it

Councils play a vital role in supporting local economies and driving growth, for example by:

- *Developing economic development & tourism strategies in collaboration with key local stakeholders*
- *Supporting growth and investment in new and existing businesses*
- *Establishing partnerships with local, national and international investors*
- *Enhancing the quality of life for their communities and making local areas more attractive to shoppers and business investment*
- *Collaborating with central government to improve infrastructure, such as transport and broadband services*
- *Working with colleges & training*

providers to ensure that local people have the skills that they and local businesses need

Some of the initiatives councils with statutory powers given (include):

- *the Go for It Programme (which is delivered by all 11 councils and managed centrally by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council),*
- *business support*
- *youth entrepreneurship,*
- *social enterprise development,*
- *female entrepreneurship,*
- *small-scale tourism accommodation development*

Councils offer a range of programmes to help businesses on finance, marketing & sales, strategic planning, digital & social media, HR issues, IP & legal issues, research & development and innovation. Since the 1990s, councils have received EU funding to support the creation of new sustainable jobs in local businesses, to assist businesses to become more competitive in indigenous and export markets and to stimulate investment in rural areas. Councils and businesses have been reliant on this funding, therefore how it is replaced will be a matter for negotiation with UK government.

Getting Involved and Accessing Support

Each of the 11 district councils in Northern Ireland has their own committee structures for progressing economic development.

1. *Ensure that you are clear about your role and are able to explain it to others*
2. *Get involved in local business networks. Talk to your businesses, residents and organisations linked to your local area and help them become aware of the potential of economic development to regenerate local areas and to improve the prospects of local people*
3. *Understand the different needs of business sectors (urban / rural; manufacturing / agri-food / technology / services / retail / tourism) in terms of competitiveness, investment and skills*
4. *Work in partnership with schools and the community and voluntary sector to stimulate entrepreneurial thinking and social enterprise*



Kinnego Marina, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

City & Growth Deals

*The recent emergence of **city and growth** deals has the potential to be a real gamechanger for local government and the economy of Northern Ireland with the provisos that councils control the resources, delivery and governance.*

With three sub regions working on growth deals in Northern Ireland an evident desire for greater devolution, with decisions being made closer to the citizen to bring about economic change, clearly exists.

City and Growth deals offer a new model of financing regional growth which can accelerate delivery of economic and infrastructural projects, tackle regional inequalities and be a catalyst for social renewal and inclusive growth. They can prompt for big picture thinking, doing things differently, creating efficiencies and unlocking difficult issues and they offer an opportunity for regions to highlight their competitive advantages on the global stage. They offer councils an opportunity to step up and show their credentials, competencies and ambition.

- *A city deal is agreed with government at portfolio level around a series of key themes. The Deal's joint Committee can then decide how to bring the deal to life.*
- *A Growth Deal is agreed with government at project level. A 5-part business case for each project must be submitted to and signed off by UK Government. This offers less local discretion over the composition of the deal.*

The local authorities of Belfast, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Ards and North Down, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim and Newry, Mourne and Down have secured UK Government funding for the Belfast City Region Deal. This will result in a 10-year investment plan to improve infrastructure, digital connectivity, tourism assets and innovation hubs as well as delivering a major skills programme. The aim of the deal is to create more and better jobs across all of the areas growth sectors.

Derry City & Strabane District Council area has been preparing for a City Deal for over four years. The Council's Strategic Growth Plan states that "A successful Derry ~ Londonderry / North West City Region is critical to the future wellbeing of everyone living within Northern Ireland and the North West of the island of Ireland". A formal bid to UK Government is expected in 2019.

In October 2018 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council, Fermanagh & Omagh District Council and Mid Ulster District Council announced their intention to collaborate on a growth deal for the southern region of Northern Ireland. While still at an early stage, a bid to UK Government is likely to be made in 2020.

Over the next decade our local councils will deliver City & Growth Deals which will have a profound effect on local places and local economies. Councillors will have to make monumental and sometimes tough decisions and show exceptional leadership to bring their fellow councillors and communities with them.

Whatever the "Deal" in composition terms, NILGA believes that all 11 councils in Northern Ireland, given the right powers, resources and fiscal / legal levers, can individually and collectively deliver a more prosperous, more equal, more stable yet diverse, local enterprise led economy, producing sustainable growth, to benefit generations to come.

In conclusion, as you will have seen from the above, Place Shaping is crucial, initially complex subject, but the social, economic and environmental benefits are clear when it all comes together. NILGA, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, continues to work with local and central government to ensure that powers and resources devolved to councils are designed and delivered in a way that has local places and local people at the centre.

4

Strategic Relationships Partnerships and Benefits

*...mechanism for constructive
liaison between Executive
Ministers and local government
elected members ...*

Part 4

Strategic Bodies

Central Local Government Partnership

The Northern Ireland Partnership Panel was established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 and had its inaugural meeting in December 2014.

The Partnership Panel was established to provide a formal mechanism for constructive liaison between Executive Ministers and local government elected members at a political level on strategic policy matters of mutual interest and concern.

The Partnership Panel consists of:

- Councillors from each of the 11 Councils
- All Executive Ministers
- NILGA Office Bearers

The Chair is held by the Minister for the Department for Communities.

The Department for Communities and NILGA provide Joint Secretariat for the Northern Ireland Partnership Panel.

As outlined in its Terms of Reference, the Partnership Panel may:

- Give advice to any Northern Ireland Department about matters affecting the exercise of any of its functions;
- Make representations to any Northern Ireland Department about matters affecting, or of concern to, those involved in local government, and;
- Give advice to those involved in local government.

The Northern Ireland Partnership Panel last met in October 2016, prior to the collapse of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive in January 2017.

The Central – Local Government Political Partnership Forum (Interim Northern Ireland Partnership Panel)

In the absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the “statutory” Northern Ireland Partnership Panel, The “non-statutory” Central – Local Government Political Partnership Forum first convened in April 2018.

The Forum brings together political representatives of councils (Local Government Partnership Panel and NILGA Office Bearers) with MLAs appointed by their parties as principal policy liaison members.

Membership of the Forum includes:

- MLAs per Party (1 or 2)
- A Member from each Council
- NILGA Office Bearers

Formal senior officer associate input is sought from:

- Council Chief Executive representation (2 or 3 per meeting)
- Permanent Secretaries (1 or 2 per meeting)

NILGA maintains the secretariat service for the Central – Local Government Political Partnership Forum with formal input from the Department for Communities.

The Forum will work collegially with government departments during the continuing political impasse to realise policy and communication benefits through joint democratic scrutiny, which ultimately delivers more effective public services for our citizens until the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly and the statutory Northern Ireland Partnership Panel is reconstituted / returned.

Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership



The Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) provides a strategic leadership, advisory and coordination function in relation to issues arising from or impacted by migration in Northern Ireland. The vision of NISMP is that Northern Ireland effectively welcomes, supports and integrates new migrants in a way which helps support future economic growth and vibrant, cohesive communities.

Board members include locally elected representatives, government departments, the voluntary & community sector and trade unions. NILGA hosts the partnership and provides secretariat support.

Through its Board and Working Groups, and through broader engagement with employers, community organisations and statutory bodies, NISMP provides a conduit where the region's strategic interests can be communicated to Government and where issues and priorities relating to migration can be understood by local decision makers and front-line agencies.

Migration is increasingly recognised as an issue which impacts on our economy, our services and our communities. It is therefore vital that we continue to build a strong and coherent voice around these issues to ensure that Northern Ireland's needs and concerns are understood by Government and reflected within UK wide immigration legislation. It is of equal importance that we continue to provide a platform where local decision makers and

community representatives can work together so that policies and practices recognise changing demographics and help to sustain diverse and vibrant communities.

NISMP provides a twice yearly briefing on migration issues for councils. It has also established the Sustainable Communities and Demographics Working Group which takes its membership from elected members and officers from each of the eleven councils. This group works to ensure that policies and practices in Northern Ireland are informed by an understanding of council demographics as they relate to migration. It also works to ensure that elected representatives and council officers understand factors which determine migration stocks and flows and how these may be influenced to help meet council social and economic priorities and promote community wellbeing.

To find out more about the work of NISMP please contact the NISMP team at the **NILGA office (028 9079 897)**.

The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. You may have already benefitted from their guidance as a candidate in the local government elections, but they have several roles you may find useful to note, as detailed below:

- **Elections and referendums**

The Electoral Commission works to support well-run elections and

referendums in the UK, offering support and guidance to those involved. They also work to ensure voters know everything they need to know about the process of casting their vote.

- **Regulator of political party finance**

They work to make sure people understand the rules around political party finance. Alongside this work, they also take action when the rules are broken and publish information on political finance.

- **Registering political parties**

They maintain and publish the registers of political parties in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A political party must be registered with the Electoral Commission in order to field candidates at an election.

- **Research**

The Electoral Commission does a wide range of research around elections and referendums, electoral registration and party and election finance. This ensures that their views and recommendations are evidence-based.

- **Public awareness**

They run campaigns before elections and referendums to make sure people are aware of when and how to register to vote and anything else they need to know.

- **Policy work**

They carry out policy work across a range of areas, for example, to ensure that the rules around all

aspects of elections are as clear and simple as possible and that the interests of voters are always put first.

You can find more detail on all of the above, information about the laws that govern the work of the Electoral Commission, regulations they have made and a range of other issues at their website.

The European Union

European Funding for Northern Ireland

Councils have been pro-active participants in European investment programmes for several decades - particularly after being granted local economic development powers in 1992. This has allowed them to become practically involved in regeneration and growth at local level. In the period up to 2019, councils have benefited from programmes such as Growth & Jobs, Interreg, Peace & Reconciliation, Rural Development, Erasmus and Horizon 2020. This investment has been vital to councils - and to you as a councillor - as it has been used to benefit local people and local places.

At the time of publication of this guide, the UK's future relationship with the EU has not been decided, therefore it is unclear if councils will be able to participate in the majority of EU funding programmes. The exception to this will be the Peace Plus Programme which seeks to merge the economic & social cohesion aims of the former cross-border Interreg programme with those of the Peace & Reconciliation programme. The European Commission along with the UK and Irish governments will support the Peace Plus programme in the next EU funding round (2021-2027). The programme will be managed by the Special EU programmes body – for more info see www.seupb.eu

We await details from UK Government on the scope and design of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is expected to replace EU funding.

NILGA and the EU: Councillor Support

NILGA's European service supports capacity building for all Local Government Members on the Monitoring Committees, Working Groups and Steering Committees of EU funded programmes to ensure that the local government sector is fully engaged and actively participating in the process.

In addition, NILGA provides guidance and assistance to Northern Ireland's (2) Committee of the Region's representatives, as well as to our representative on the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

At the time of publication it is unclear if local government representatives will have a role to play in monitoring European Programmes. The EU Committee of the Regions is expected to create a 'contact group' to allow continued collaboration between the EU and UK, the details of this will be available once the future EU relationship is agreed.

Commonwealth Local Government Forum



Local Government Associations across the 53 Commonwealth nations are members of the CLGF, based in London, which works to strengthen democratic local government across the Commonwealth – through best practice conferences and events, technical assistance projects and research.

As a member, NILGA draws together advantages for councils and councillors in receiving (and offering our own, Northern Ireland councils) best practice on municipality led economic development, delivering Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through councils and communities, together with obtaining paid and voluntary learning exchanges for young councillors and council officers to experience local government bodies in the Commonwealth.

NILGA aims in 2020/21 to develop a Commonwealth Investment Summit here in Northern Ireland, so that investors from major growth regions like India, Canada, Australia, Africa and the European Commonwealth can see first-hand the economic development work of our 11 councils.



nirect is the official government website for Northern Ireland citizens. nirect brings together lots of information from government departments and agencies, allowing interactive services to be accessed on matters like Dog and Vehicle Licenses, Flooding, Planning, Pensions and much more.

www.nirect.gov.uk

Central Government Department and their Agencies

The Executive Office



The Executive Office (TEO), previously the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), was created on 9 May 2016 as part of the implementation of actions emanating from the Fresh Start Agreement. The vision of TEO is to build a peaceful and prosperous society with respect for the rule of law where everyone can enjoy a better quality of life now and in years to come. Underpinning this vision, the overall aim of TEO is to contribute to and oversee the co-ordination of Executive policies and programmes to deliver a peaceful, fair, equal and prosperous society.

Key TEO Objectives

TEO's vision and aim are supported through the following key functions and objectives:

- The effective operation of the institutions of government in the delivery of an agreed Programme for Government (PfG);
- Delivering the Executive's Good Relations strategy: Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC);
- Tackling Disadvantage and Promoting Equality of Opportunity; and
- Driving investment and sustainable development, including promotion of the Executive's policy interests internationally.

TEO Management Structure

The First Minister and deputy First Minister,

supported by the Junior Ministers, have overall political responsibility and accountability for all the Department's activities. They set the strategic policy and resources framework for the Department.

The Permanent Secretary for the Department and Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service is David Sterling. Dr Mark Browne is the Accounting Officer for the Department.

The four key organisational structures within TEO are as follows:

Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations – which has responsibility for Equality, Victims, Human Rights, Delivering Social Change (DSC), Urban Villages, Racial Equality, Communities in Transition, Good Relations, TBUC, Infrastructure and Finance and Corporate Services.

Programme for Government (PFG) and Executive Support – which has responsibility for PFG and NICS of the Future, Executive Information Service (EIS), Executive and Central Advisory Division and Private Offices.

Office of the Legislative Couns – which has responsibility for the Office of the Legislative Counsel and Statutory Publications Office (SPO).

International Relations – which has responsibility for the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) (Joint Secretariat – North), European Division, the Northern Ireland Bureaus in Washington and China and EU Future Relations.

The Department is responsible for nine Arm's Length Bodies including seven Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and two ALBs that reside within the TEO accounting boundary.

TEO Non-Departmental Public Bodies

- Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland (CVSNI)
- Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation (MLKDC)
- NI Community Relations Council (NICRC)
- NI Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC)
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)
- Strategic Investment Board Limited (SIB)
- Victims and Survivors Service Limited (VSS)

Other TEO ALBs (within the accounting boundary)

- Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland (CPANI)
- Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland (AGNI)

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)

The ECNI is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body. Its vision is a society in Northern Ireland where there is equality for all and a common understanding of the benefits of a more equal society. Its mission is to improve people's lives through the effective implementation of its statutory responsibilities.

The Commission is responsible for providing protection against discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, religion and political opinion, sex and sexual orientation. The Commission also oversees the statutory duties on public authorities to: promote equality of opportunity and affirmative action; work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment; keep relevant

legislation under review; promote good relations between persons of different racial groups and good disability practice; and oversee the effectiveness of statutory equality duties in public authorities.

The Commission provides advice and assistance to people who believe they have been discriminated against, including in certain cases, representation in court or tribunal. The Commission does not make rulings on whether or not discrimination has occurred; this is for a tribunal or court to determine. Last year, the Commission dealt with over 3,680 legal enquiries. Just under half of those calls were disability enquiries including an increase in special education needs (SEND) enquiries.

The Commission engages with people throughout Northern Ireland to increase awareness of the responsibilities the legislation places on employers and service providers and the role of the Commission in providing information and guidance to assist them.

A core Commission strategy, over a number of years, has been to work with employers and service providers to encourage them to tackle key inequalities and deliver improvements in employment practices, increased access and improved customer service for employees and service users. It issues guides and codes of practice and operates an advice line for employers and general enquiries. The Commission also provides reliable, relevant data and research to inform the debate on equality issues. It has powers of formal investigation, including powers to obtain information and to issue reports. The Commission also has a responsibility to keep equality law under review, under which it can recommend legislative improvements to government.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)



DAERA has responsibility for food, farming, environmental, fisheries, forestry and sustainability policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland.

The Department assists the sustainable development of the agri-food, environmental, fishing and forestry sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, having regard for the needs of the consumers, the protection of human, animal and plant health, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

DAERA provides a business development service for farmers and growers and a veterinary service for administration of animal health and welfare.

The Department's College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) delivers training and further and higher education courses in the agri-food sector.

DAERA is responsible to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in Great Britain for the administration of schemes affecting the whole of the United Kingdom. The Department also oversees the application of European Union agricultural, environmental, fisheries and rural development policy to Northern Ireland.

DAERA has two Executive Agencies:

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Forest Service

The Department also sponsors a number of Non-Departmental Public Bodies including: the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)

For contact information related to DAERA, please refer to Appendix x

Department for Communities



The Department for Communities is the largest of nine Northern Ireland departments. It was established under the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

DfC provides support to meet the needs of some of the most disadvantaged citizens, families and communities across Northern Ireland. Areas of DfC responsibility included delivery of the social welfare system including child maintenance support, providing advice for those seeking employment, ensuring the availability of good quality and affordable housing, facilities for sports and leisure, supporting local government, maintaining museums and revitalising town and city centres. In delivering these services, DfC achieves a wide range of Programme for Government (PfG) targets and commitments, and works in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory bodies.

DfC has strategic responsibility in Northern Ireland for setting policy, bringing forward

legislation and resourcing in the following areas:

- Housing
- Urban regeneration
- Sport
- Benefits and pensions
- Social legislation
- Helping people find employment
- Arts and culture
- Museums and libraries
- Child maintenance
- Voluntary and community sector and the regulation of charities
- Ulster Scots and Irish Language
- Historic environment
- Local government
- Public Records Office

The Department comprises four functional groups which work together to achieve the Department's overall vision and strategic objectives. These groups are: Strategic Planning and Resources; Housing, Urban Regeneration and Local Government; Engaged Communities; and Work & Inclusion.

The Strategic Planning and Resources Group is made up of four Divisions.

Financial Management Directorate is responsible for overall financial management of the Department's Budget as allocated by the Executive and HM Treasury resources allocated to Social Security.

The Asset Management and Governance Division is responsible for corporate governance in the Department.

Corporate Services Division is responsible for producing the Department's corporate plan and business plan and drawing together the Department's contribution to the Programme

for Government. The Division also provides a range of corporate services for the Department.

Information Services and Property

Management Division is responsible for a range of corporate functions relating to the processing and use of information across the Department.

Housing, Urban Regeneration and Local Government Group comprises five Divisions:

North West Development Office is responsible for the delivery of physical regeneration schemes in the Derry City and Strabane District as well as Limavady.

Belfast Regeneration Directorate manages the implementation of strategies and programmes which bring about the physical regeneration and development of the City centre and the wider Belfast area, as well as the Causeway Coast and Glens council area.

Regional Development Office manages the implementation of strategies and programmes which aim to create vibrant and viable urban City and Town centres in 8 of the 11 District Councils.

Local Government and Housing Regulation Division consists of three Branches.

Local Government Branch is responsible for the policy and legislation which sets the administrative and financial framework within which Northern Ireland's 11 District Councils operate in order to support and enable effective and accountable local government. This includes setting the accountability framework for councils (i.e. their corporate and democratic governance arrangements, ethical standards framework and performance

improvement framework). DfC has Executive lead for local government including community planning. Community Planning is one of the key drivers to achieve more joined up government and better outcomes for citizens. The key policy objective underpinning community planning is an integrated approach to local plans devised by Community Planning Partnerships that are complementary and to will play a key role in terms of assisting to deliver PfG/NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan(s).

The Department for Communities has published statutory guidance for the operation of community planning and prescribes the statutory partners for community planning in subordinate legislation. The wider role of NICS Departments engaging with councils on community planning is important to ensure alignment with the outcomes in the Programme for Government (PfG). As well as this, the Branch has an oversight role for local government performance improvement. It seeks to maintain constructive working relations with councils to better enable them to carry out both of these statutory functions. It also manages the financial support provided by the Executive to local government. The Branch is also responsible for paying De-rating, Rates Support and Transferred Functions grants to councils and for maintaining and updating the legislative framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland). The Branch is responsible for overseeing the dissolution of the Local Government Staff Commission and the transfer of the Appeals Service to the Department of Justice (currently on hold due to the NI Assembly suspension).

Social Policy Branch is responsible for setting the policy and legislative framework for NI Social Policy.

Housing Regulation Branch undertakes the role of regulating Registered Housing Associations in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Department as the Regulatory Authority.

Housing Division is responsible for policy, legislation and delivery across a wide range of issues related to housing in Northern Ireland. The Division has two Grade 5 commands namely Housing Supply Policy Directorate and Social Housing Policy and Oversight Directorate. In social housing, the Division is responsible for managing the Department's relationship with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the delivery of the new build social housing programme and shared neighbourhoods under Together: Building United Communities (TBUC), supporting vulnerable people to live independently through the Supporting People Programme, and taking forward the Social Housing Reform Programme. The Division is also investigating and developing ways to address wider housing market issues – especially increasing overall housing supply and the regulation of the private rented sector– and addressing homelessness and fuel poverty.

Engaged Communities Group consists of eight Divisions.

Engaged Communities Group works with others in DfC, other Departments, the wider public and the community and voluntary sector to help deliver the overall vision of the Department in supporting people and helping to deliver substantial and lasting change across all communities. This includes significant long term strategic investment in physical infrastructure associated with the Group's functions and delivering tailored programmes and services that focus on outcomes such as skills development, improving health, tackling poverty and enhancing social inclusion.

Historic Environment Division realises the community and economic value of our historic environment through: designating structures and landscape features of historic importance; commenting as a statutory consultee on planning applications which impact these structures; supporting, including through funding, heritage projects; managing 190 Monuments in State Care; and maintaining associated records and archives.

Public Record Office NI (PRON) is responsible for receiving, preserving and making available public records. Its functions include: transfer of records of Government Departments, courts of law, and wider public sector, and related records and information management; deposit of records by private individuals, churches, businesses and institutions; access to records onsite and online; and preservation of the archives, both paper and digital.

Culture Division is responsible for policy development, oversight and delivery for the arts, creative industries, cultural and language sectors, including sign language and architecture and the built environment. It oversees the work of the Arts Council for Northern Ireland and the North South Language Body (Foras na Gaeilge for Irish Language and Ulster-Scots Agency). The Division oversees and provides a secretariat to the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) for Architecture and Built Environment. The Division is also responsible for a review of the structure and functions of the Department's Arm's Length Bodies.

Voluntary and Community Division is responsible for: developing the relationship between the Voluntary and Community Sector and government and supporting the sector; policy development for charity regulation, volunteering, general advice, debt and social

innovation; sponsorship of the Charities Commission NI; and Fresh Start commitments for women and supporting a culture of lawfulness.

Active Communities Division has a specific focus on sporting matters, museums and libraries and also on engagement with communities through the Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) strategy. Active Communities Division works with its Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), stakeholders and communities to improve life chances, experiences and opportunities for everyone in our society, particularly those who are currently marginalised, under-represented or excluded.

Infrastructure Planning & Delivery Support Unit is responsible for engaging with senior stakeholders within ECG, councils and the third sector to ensure the development of a cohesive, sustainable and comprehensive capital investment portfolio for the group, which will respond to current estate pressures and future strategic needs. The Unit is also responsible for the ongoing delivery of the Regional and Sub Regional Stadia Programmes.

Community Empowerment Division is responsible for delivering the Neighbourhood Renewal, Areas at Risk and Small pockets of Deprivation Programme. These are area based Programmes designed to address issues associated with spatial concentrations of deprivation. The Division's European Unit fulfils the Accountable Department role for the Shared Spaces (capital element) of the Peace IV Programme.

Social Inclusion Policy Division aims to enable, encourage and promote Social Inclusion, diversity, and participation in Society. It has Policy responsibility for Gender Equality,

Sexual Orientation, Older People, and the Active Ageing Strategy, Disability Policy, Poverty Policy, and the (Official's Draft) Social Strategy and Life Opportunities Programme. The Division also has the sponsor and partnership role for two of DfC's Arm's Length Bodies:

- (i) Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People - www.niccy.org ; and
- (ii) The Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland - www.copni.org

Work & Inclusion Group is made up of seven Divisions.

The Group exists for the purposes of promoting work, wellbeing and fairness, and has responsibility for building people's confidence and helping them to find work; helping people to stay in work and making work pay; providing a fair and sustainable pension system; protecting public money by reducing fraud and error; and paying more money to more children through the Child Maintenance Service.

Social Security Policy and Legislation Division develops policy and legislation for social security, pensions and child maintenance in Northern Ireland to ensure parity is maintained within the social security system in Great Britain. The Division ensures that Northern Ireland requirements are included in the development of UK social security, child maintenance and pensions policy. They are also responsible for developing the policy and legislation for the mitigation payments recommended by the Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group.

Child Maintenance and Wraparound Service

The Child Maintenance Service promotes the financial responsibility parents have for their

children. The office in Belfast also delivers a Child Maintenance service for Department for Work & Pensions.

The Make the Call Wraparound Service is responsible for ensuring that individuals and households across Northern Ireland are receiving all the social security benefits and other Government support and services to which they are entitled to.

Pensions, Disability, Fraud & Error

Reduction Division is responsible for the payment of disability benefits and pensions, including the new Personal Independence Payment arising from welfare reforms. It has operational responsibility for the delivery of mitigation payments to those adversely impacted by the introduction of welfare reforms. The Directorate also provides a benefit security service for the wider Work and Inclusion Group, protecting the integrity of the benefit system from fraud or error risks and securing the customer data it holds.

Working Age Services provides financial assistance to working age customers to support them whilst they are too ill to work or are seeking work, as well as a personalised employment service which works to help customers identify suitable employment. These services are delivered through a network of 39 Jobs & Benefits Offices and Jobcentres. The Division also delivers Employment and Support Allowance to claimants in Northern Ireland as well as providing a range of benefit services to DWP including Universal Credit and a range of legacy benefit products.

Universal Credit delivers the Welfare Reform programme, which aims to introduce a simpler, fairer benefits system and Universal Credit. Within the Department there is a Universal Credit Programme team responsible for putting in place the policy, operational and

financial arrangements necessary to introduce Universal Credit in Northern Ireland. It also has responsibility for decommissioning the existing working age benefit services.

Work & Wellbeing Division leads on the development and implementation (working with the Departments of Health and the Economy) of a social welfare policy agenda which has a specific focus on work, and wellbeing. This will be delivered within a benefits framework which encourages and supports people of working age to find work, stay in work and progress in work, increasing their earnings to achieve economic independence. The Division is also responsible for: employment service policy, design and delivery of active labour market programmes such as Steps 2 Success, including employer engagement and disability employment programmes.

Welfare Reform Evaluation Directorate was created to take an overview of the evaluation of Welfare Reform.

Department for the Economy



DfE provides a wide range of services to help develop the Northern Ireland economy. The Department is responsible for:

- Economic Policy
- Employment and Skills Programmes (including apprenticeships)
- Energy
- Further Education
- Higher Education

- Employment Rights
- Consumer Affairs
- European Fund Management
- Telecoms
- Tourism
- Insolvency Service
- Minerals and Petroleum
- Credit Unions and Societies
- Statistics and Economic Research

The Department is structured into five main business areas (Groups) as follows:

1. Strategic policy;
2. Skills & Business Development;
3. Infrastructure & Regulation;
4. Higher Education & Investment; and,
5. RHI Taskforce (temporary)

DfE Partner Bodies

DfE works with a range of Partner Bodies which play key roles in implementing and delivering economic policy.

Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI)

Invest NI's overall goal is to help create wealth for the benefit of the whole community by helping to rebuild the economy in the short term and rebalance it in the long term. It supports business development, helps increase productivity and export levels, attracts high quality inward investment, and stimulates a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation. Invest NI provides support for sectors that offer high returns for the Northern Ireland economy. This involves helping to build the connections and infrastructure that will promote excellence in specific areas.

Tourism Northern Ireland (Tourism NI)

Tourism NI works to encourage tourism and to encourage the provision and improvement of tourist accommodation and tourist amenities. It markets Northern Ireland as a tourist

destination to visitors within Northern Ireland and from the Republic of Ireland, and advises the Department generally on the formulation and implementation of its policy in relation to the development of tourism.

Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI)

HSENI aims to ensure that risks to people's health and safety arising from work activities are effectively controlled. It promotes key workplace health and safety messages and themes to targeted sectors and groups; communicates appropriate, timely and practical workplace health and safety information and advice; improves compliance with health and safety standards through inspection and investigation activities; and ensures that an effective and up-to-date health and safety at work regulatory framework is maintained.

Consumer Council Northern Ireland (CCNI)

CCNI has a statutory remit to promote and safeguard the interest of consumers and has specific functions in relation to energy, water, transport, postal services and food. These include considering complaints and enquiries, carrying out research and educating and informing consumers.

Northern Ireland Screen (NI Screen)

NI Screen is the government-backed lead agency in NI for the film, television and digital content industry, driving global growth through boosting the economy, celebrating culture and enhancing education. Its mission is to accelerate the development of a dynamic and sustainable screen industry and culture in NI. Invest NI is its primary funder.

Labour Relations Agency (LRA)

The Agency provides impartial and confidential employment relations services to those engaged in industry, commerce and the public

services, by providing advice on employment practices and assistance on employment policies and procedures. It is also active in resolving disputes through its conciliation, mediation and arbitration services.

Construction Industry Training Board Northern Ireland (CITBNI)

CITBNI is funded by a statutory levy from registered "in scope" construction employers. CITBNI's role includes identifying training needs, encouraging/advising on training, provision of training grants and research and policy development.

Industrial Court

The Industrial Court adjudicates on applications relating to statutory recognition and de-recognition of trade unions for collective bargaining purposes, which cannot be agreed voluntarily. It also determines disputes between trade unions and employers over the disclosure of information for collective bargaining purposes and for dealing with complaints regarding Information and Consultation rights.

Office of the Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal

Industrial Tribunals are independent judicial bodies in Northern Ireland that hear and determine claims to do with employment matters. These include a range of claims relating to unfair dismissal, breach of contract, wages and other payments as well as discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, part time working and equal pay.

The Fair Employment Tribunal is an independent judicial body in Northern Ireland that hears and determines complaints of discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion.

Certification Officer for Northern Ireland

The Certification Officer has investigatory, regulatory and quasi-judicial functions in relation to trade unions and employers' associations, determining union independence, investigating financial affairs, supervising mergers and union political funds, ensuring compliance with balloting requirements, ensuring that annual returns are made, and determining complaints made by members against their union under statutory provisions and for breaches of union rules.

Universities

The Department is responsible for the formulation of policy and administration of funding to support education, research and related activities in the Northern Ireland higher education sector. Higher education in Northern Ireland is delivered through three universities and two university colleges.

Further education colleges

The Department is responsible for the policy, strategic development and financing of the statutory further education sector. The sector, through its 6 regional Colleges, delivers a wide range of skills provision, including Departmental programmes, such as Training for Success and Apprenticeships.

InterTradeIreland (North South Body)

One of six North South Bodies, InterTradeIreland's main function is the promotion of trade and business on an all- island and cross-border basis and the enhancement of the global competitiveness of the economy to the mutual benefit of NI and the Republic of Ireland.

Tourism Ireland (North South Body)

Tourism Ireland was set up under the Good Friday Agreement and is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland in Great Britain and overseas as a tourism destination and to support Northern Ireland to realise its tourism potential.

Department for Education



Department of
Education

www.education-ni.gov.uk

Role and Functions

The Department's primary statutory duty is to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy. The Department's main statutory areas of responsibility are 0-4 provision, primary, post-primary, special education and the youth service. It also has responsibility for the development and management of an Executive Strategy for Children and Young People and an Executive Childcare Strategy.

The Department is accountable through its Minister to the Assembly for the effective delivery of its statutory functions and for the effective use of the public funds for which it is responsible. It is supported in delivering its functions by a range of Arm's Length Bodies, each of which is accountable to the Department.

DE Corporate Goals

DE has identified six corporate goals that support its vision for "an education system that is recognised internationally for the quality of its teaching and learning, for the achievements of its young people and for a focus on meeting their needs."

The corporate goals are:

- 1. Improving the wellbeing of children and young people** – through ensuring that all of our children and young people grow up in a society that provides the support they need to achieve their potential.

2. Raising standards for all

– through high quality early years provision, excellent teaching and learning in the classroom and effective provision of youth and other children's services, ensuring that all young people enjoy and do well in their learning and their achievements and attainment are appropriately recognised and celebrated, including through qualifications.

3. Closing the performance gap, increasing access and equality

– addressing the underachievement that can hold our children and young people back; ensuring that young people who face barriers or are at risk of social exclusion are supported to achieve to their full potential; and ensuring that our services are planned effectively on an area basis to provide children and young people with full access to high quality learning experiences, both in school and out of school.

4. Developing the education workforce

– recognising the particular professional role of early years' providers, teachers and school leaders in delivering an effective, age-appropriate curriculum and raising standards and also the important role of other education professionals and those who support them.

5. Improving the learning environment

– making sure that strategic investment supports the delivery of the area plans; that the premises in which young people grow and learn are safe, fit for purpose and conducive to learning; and that the environment provides opportunities for sharing and for building a more cohesive society.

6. Delivering high quality education services

– ensuring that the arrangements for governing and managing education are modern, accountable and child-centred and that education services are delivered efficiently and effectively in support of schools.

DE is responsible for:

Inclusion and Well-being Directorate

- Special Education;
- Education Other Than at School;
- Nurture Provision
- Safeguarding;
- Anti-bullying;
- Middletown Centre for Autism;
- Looked After Children;
- Newcomer and Vulnerable Pupils;
- Traveller and Roma Pupils;
- School Aged Mothers;
- Children of Service Personnel; and
- Performance Licensing

Youth, Early Years and Childcare Directorate

- Early Years Policy;
- Youth Service Policy;
- Childcare Policy;
- Universal Pre-school Programme;
- Targeted Early Intervention Funding;
- Early Years Capital Funding; and
- Sponsor Directorate for the Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards Directorate

- School Curriculum and Entitlement Framework;
- Assessment of Learning;
- Qualifications Development, Management and Regulation;
- School Improvement, Raising Standards, Literacy and Numeracy;
- Effective use of ICT in Schools; and

- Sponsor Directorate for the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Promoting Collaboration, Tackling Disadvantage Directorate

- Tackling Educational Disadvantage;
- Irish Medium and Integrated Education;
- Teacher Education;
- Shared Education; and
- Community Relations

Children and Young People's Directorate

- Children and Young People's Strategy;
- Early Intervention Transformation Play and Leisure Project;
- Free School Meals;
- Boarding and Clothing Allowances;
- Education Maintenance Allowances;
- Food in Schools Including Nutritional Standards;
- Elective Home Education; and
- Home to School Transport

Transformation Programme Directorate

- Review of Home to School Transport Project;
- Transition of Young People into Careers Project;
- Managing Schools for the Future Project;
- Delivering Schools for the Future Project; and
- Transition of Children into Education Project

Education Workforce Development Directorate

- Pay and Conditions of Service for Teachers and Support Staff;
- Processing of Teachers' Salaries;
- Administration of the NI Teachers' Pension Scheme; and
- Ensuring Pay Remit Business Cases for all Education Sector Staff are Completed According to DoF and Northern Ireland Executive Public Sector Pay Policy

Investment and Infrastructure Directorate

- Education Estate Management Policy;
- Schools' Capital Programmes – Major Works, Minor Works and School Enhancement Programme;
- Investment in Shared Education Campuses and Integrated Schools from Fresh Start Agreement Funding;
- Youth Capital Programme; and
- Grant Clawback from Closed or Vacated Voluntary Schools

Area Planning, Admissions and Shared Campuses Directorate

- Area Planning Policy;
- School Admissions; and
- Shared Education Campuses Programme

Finance Directorate

- Delivery and Monitoring of Balanced Annual Resource Budgets;
- Development of and Preparation for Future Resource Budgets;
- Provision of Main and Spring Supplementary Estimates;
- Determining Annually Managed Expenditure Requirements;
- Preparation of Resource and Whole of Government Accounts for the Department and Teachers' Superannuation Scheme;
- Effective Operation of the Common Funding Scheme;
- Financial Governance of the Department's Budgets; and
- Effective Financial Management and Oversight of a Number of Arm's Length Bodies

Corporate Services and Governance Directorate

- DE Corporate Functions;
- Minister's Private Office;
- Press Office;
- Central Co-ordination;
- Equality and Human Rights;
- EU/ International Issues;
- Information Management Including FOI, DPA and GDPR;
- DE Corporate Plan;
- DE Business Plan;
- Business Plans for DE Arm's Length Bodies;
- Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers;
- Corporate Risk Management of DE Arm's Length Bodies;
- School Governance;
- Governance and Accountability Arrangements for the Oversight of DE Arm's Length Bodies;
- Public Appointments;
- Administering and Monitoring Grant Support to DE Sectoral Body Organisations; and
- Co-ordinating DE Policy and Role in Relation to BREXIT

Strule Education Campus Programme

- The schools included in the Programme are Arvalee School and Resource Centre, Christian Brothers Grammar School, Loreto Grammar School, Omagh Academy Grammar School, Omagh High School and Sacred Heart College; and
- Key projects include: the procurement, design and construction of the schools and shared areas; oversight of the development of an educational model; development of the ownership, governance and management

arrangements for the campus; working with Transport NI to ensure the delivery of the required road improvements; planning for effective migration prior to campus opening; and strategic planning for use of the existing post-primary school sites once they are vacated.

Analytical Services Unit

- Statistics and Research;
- Analysis and Evaluation; and
- Economic Advice

Education and Training Inspectorate

- Provide an Unbiased, Independent, Professional Assessment of the Quality of Learning and Teaching, Including Standards Achieved by Learners;
- Identify and Report on Educational Developments;
- Comment on the Influence and Policies of DE and DfE within Education, Training and Youth Sectors; and
- Publish Reports on Individual Organisations, and Summary Reports on Aspects of the Quality of Education, Training and Youth Sectors

DE Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies

- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Education Authority;
- Exceptional Circumstances Body;
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland;
- Middletown Centre for Autism;
- Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment;
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education;
- Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Note: Other bodies including the Diocesan Education Committees, Governing Bodies of certain Voluntary Grammar Schools and Grant-maintained Integrated Schools are non-administratively classified government entities created by legislation to carry out public functions specific to education, but are neither Agencies nor NDPBs.

Similarly, other sectoral representative bodies such as Controlled Schools' Support Council, Catholic Schools' Trustee Service, Governing Bodies Association are third sector organisations that are uniquely classified to undertake specific education roles - they are publicly funded but are not NDPBs.

Department of Health (DoH)



The Department of Health (DOH) has a statutory responsibility to promote an integrated system of health and social care (HSC) designed to secure improvement in:

- the physical and mental health of people in Northern Ireland;
- the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness; and
- the social wellbeing of the people in Northern Ireland

The Department is also responsible for establishing arrangements for the efficient and effective management of the fire and Rescue Services in Northern Ireland. It discharges these duties both by direct departmental action and through its 17 arm's length bodies (ALBs).

DOH Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS)

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) serves the entire population of Northern Ireland providing a range of fire and Rescue Services in Northern Ireland.

NIFRS is committed to delivering a fire and rescue service and working in partnership with others to ensure the safety and well-being of the community.

NIFRS provides an emergency response to fires, road traffic collisions and other specialist rescue incidents and provides community safety education and advice to help keep people safe.

Health and Social Care Board (HSCB)

The Health and Social Care Board is responsible for commissioning services, resource management and performance management and service improvement.

It works to identify and meet the needs of the Northern Ireland population through its five Local Commissioning Groups which cover the same geographical areas as the HSC Trusts.

Public Health Agency

The Public Health Agency (PHA) has the key functions of improving health and wellbeing and health protection. It also provides professional input to the commissioning process. The PHA is jointly responsible (with the HSCB) for the development of a fully integrated commissioning plan for health and social care in Northern Ireland.

The PHA works in partnership with local government, key organisations and other sectors to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

Department for Finance



Current corporate information, including publications, contact details and news can be accessed via the Department of Finance website: **www.finance-ni.gov.uk**

Departmental Aim

The Department aims to help the Northern Ireland Executive secure the most appropriate and effective use of resources and services for the benefit of the community. In pursuing this aim, the key objective of the Department is to deliver quality, cost effective and efficient public services and administration in the department's areas of executive responsibility.

Our Key Responsibilities

Further detail on the Department's responsibilities can be accessed on its website but these are summarised below:

Finance - Northern Ireland's public finances, including the NI budget and guidance on accountability and financial management;

Working in the Northern Ireland Civil Service – employment information for civil servants, including pay scales and pensions information;

Procurement - public sector procurement, including advice, guidance and business opportunities;

Building Regulations and energy efficiency of buildings - including legislation, guidance and technical details;

Civil law reform - reform and development

of the civil law in Northern Ireland, including private family law, trusts and property law, tort and private international law;

Public Sector Reform - working collaboratively with other organisations to support, influence, lead and enable reform across the public sector;

Digital and communication services - shared services work across NICS, including nidirect (the government services website) and the Digital Transformation Programme.

Public Delivery - the Department provides a range of frontline services:

- The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) provides statistical and research services to support decision making across government. It is also responsible for delivery and analysis of the Census in Northern Ireland and manages the registration of births, adoptions, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships service for Northern Ireland.
- Land and Property Services (LPS) collect and manage the various rate relief and rate rebate schemes in Northern Ireland (collecting over £1.2bn of regional and district rates each year). It also maintains the land register, registry of deeds and statutory charges register for Northern Ireland and provides property valuation services to the public sector, as well as providing mapping services across the public and private sectors.

Supporting Government

In addition, the Department delivers a significant portfolio of shared services to other government departments: human resources, ICT, finance, internal audit, property management, procurement, statistical and legal services.

Department for Infrastructure (DfI)



The draft Programme for Government (PfG) is the highest level strategic document of the Executive – setting out the priorities the Executive will pursue and detailing the most significant actions it proposes to take to achieve those priorities. The actions will contribute towards the Executive’s purpose of “Improving wellbeing for all – by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth”. This draft is based on a new approach for PfG, known as Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA). OBA focuses on the impact on the citizen of the actions we take, working with and through our key delivery partners. Sustained collaboration, across departmental, organisational and sectoral boundaries, is required to deliver real change.

The DfI Permanent Secretary is the Outcome Owner for Outcome 11 “We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.” Outcome 11 focuses on the importance of connectivity as a key enabler of economic well-being, environmental improvements and social cohesion. This includes our road network, public transport network, walking and cycling infrastructure, water infrastructure, housing stock, broadband and online service delivery. Under this outcome the Department is directly responsible for **three indicators**.

- Average journey time on key economic corridors;
- % of all journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- NI Water Overall Performance Assessment.

Through its projects and actions, the Department also makes a key contribution to delivery of Outcome 2: We live and work sustainably protecting the environment and Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives. We also contribute to Outcome 8: We care for others and we help those in need.

The Department is responsible for a wide range of functions, which include:

- regional development policy;
- planning policy and legislation;
- processing regionally significant development (RSD) planning applications, call-in applications and all others where the Department retains ownership;
- working with local government in taking forward a new suite of Transport Plans for NI to inform and support the outworking of the Community Planning and Local Development Planning processes in alignment with PfG Outcomes;
- contributing to the delivery of councils’ Community Planning and Local Development Planning programmes in line with agreed timetables and statutory timescales;
- transport strategy, accessible and sustainable transport policy;
- maintenance, management and improvement of the public road network, including Blue Badges and Parking Enforcement;
- implementation of a range of sustainable transport and active travel projects;
- public transport policy and performance;
- road safety, vehicle and driver testing, driver licensing and enforcement;
- flood risk management in relation to watercourse and coastal flooding;
- policy and legislation on water, sewerage services, flooding and drainage and

- management of the Department's shareholder interest in NI Water;
- developing the recreational and navigational potential of inland waterways;
- promotion of Crumlin Road Gaol as a visitor attraction and conference centre and the development of the St. Lucia Barracks in Omagh; and,
- Ports policy and certain aviation matters.

In addition, the Department sponsors and is accountable for both NI Water and the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC). Working with the Department of Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht in the South we sponsor the work of Waterways Ireland. The Drainage Council is a Non Departmental Public Body which scrutinises the drainage functions of the Department, in line with the Drainage (NI) Order 1973.

We deliver our functions through our workforce of some three thousand people located right across the region.

Departmental Structure

The Department is split into three Core Groups:

- Planning, Water and DVA;
- Transport and Resources; and,
- Roads and Rivers.

Planning, Water And Dva

Regional Planning Directorate

The overall purpose of the planning system is to secure the orderly and consistent development of land, further sustainable development and improve wellbeing. Regional Planning Directorate has responsibility for developing strategic planning policy and legislation and providing advice and guidance

to support the effective operation of the two-tier planning system. In addition, the Directorate is responsible for supporting local councils in the delivery of an efficient planning system through performance management monitoring, bringing forward continuous improvement initiatives and regular engagement. The Directorate also has a strategic oversight role of the planning system to ensure, amongst other matters, that the effectiveness and integrity of the system are upheld. This includes working with local government to implement a new Planning IT System.

The Directorate is responsible for the review, monitoring and implementation of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035, which was published in March 2012. The RDS is a long term plan which aims to deliver the spatial aspects of the Programme for Government.

Strategic Planning Directorate

Strategic Planning Directorate has overall responsibility for processing planning applications deemed to be of 'regional significance' or those which may be 'called in' from local councils for Departmental decision. As part of the new two tier planning system, the Directorate also has an operational oversight and a development plan oversight role with the local councils. In exercising its responsibilities, the Department's key objective is to ensure that Local Development Plans (LDPs) reflect, and help deliver upon, the priorities of the draft Programme for Government, as well as take account of the RDS and policy and guidance prepared by the Department. As part of the Department's oversight role regarding LDP's there is a role in relation to the management of the overall LDP programme and providing support to councils. Subsequent to this, the Department also performs a consultee role, with Planning taking the lead in the coordinated DfI response with input from the wider Department.

Connected to both the oversight role and consultee role is the implementation function for the Department to ensure objectives are supported by LDP policies.

The Directorate is also responsible for the regeneration of Crumlin Road Gaol and St Lucia, a former military site in Omagh, as a public asset, transforming the area's physical appearance and contributing to the economy locally and regionally.

Water and Drainage

Water and Drainage Policy Division has responsibility for developing policies to protect and improve the operation of the water and sewerage network and works with other parts of government to develop an integrated approach to managing flood risk. Responsibilities also include leading on the delivery of the aims and objectives of the Executive's Sustainable Water - A Long Term Water Strategy and the Living with Water Programme, which is coordinating work across a number of departments and local government to address the future drainage needs of Belfast and other parts of the region.

In the absence of domestic charging, the Division ensures NI Water is funded through payment of subsidies. It also monitors NI Water's performance, both financial and non-financial, against the budget and operating plan and the Price Control 15 (PC15), in line with the Department's Shareholder interest.

Contact:
Water and Drainage Policy Division

Room 1-22
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8GB

tel: 028 9054 2985
email: waterpolicy@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA)

DVA's vision is 'Safer vehicles and safer drivers', and its key role is "to contribute to road safety, law enforcement and a cleaner environment by promoting compliance of drivers, vehicles and transport operators through testing, licensing, enforcement and education."

In order to achieve this 'mission', the Agency has a number of strategic objectives. These are to:

- improve compliance with statutory requirements;
- deliver quality services to meet the needs of customers and other stakeholders;
- apply appropriate quality standards to all current and new processes;
- improve our efficiency, effectiveness and economy;
- develop the organisation and our people; and
- Improve the quality, integrity and security of our records.

Its main functions and responsibilities are:

- vehicle and driver testing;
- driver licensing;
- driving and riding instructor registration;
- road transport licensing;
- compliance audits and enforcement of licensing, roadworthiness and other legal requirements for goods and passenger carrying operators and their vehicles;
- other requirements in relation to vehicles including Transports Internationaux Routier checks, collision investigations and checking repair work following defect/prohibition notices; and,
- technical vehicle and driver standards.

Transport and Resources

Transport Strategy

Transport Strategy Division supports the Department's focus on safe and sustainable transport through its regulatory role in relation to freight, bus and wider legislative functions.

The Division works closely with business areas across DfI, the wider NICS, local government and key stakeholders to promote an integrated approach to transport and land use planning and positive place making. In line with this, the Division is currently taking forward the preparation of a new suite of Transport Plans for Northern Ireland. This work is being progressed in close partnership with local government to ensure a joined-up approach with the LDP process and the identification of priorities which support the ambitions set out in the PfG and councils' Community Plans. The Division's focus in this regard is on enhancing regional and local connectivity through our roads and public transport network and our global connections through our ports. This focus also underpins the Division's approach in coordinating the Department's Brexit work programme and engagement with European Institutions and funding programmes.

Public Transport

Public Transport Division is responsible for the sponsorship of Translink and works alongside Translink and others to promote and improve public transport. This includes provision of Capital and Revenue funding of over £100 million annually.

The Division is focused on creating a more accessible and inclusive transport system, through its work with Translink and Rathlin Island Ferry Service; provision of grant funding to a number of Community and Voluntary

Sector organisations to provide specialist transport; administering the Concessionary Fares scheme; and through the development of accessible transport policy.

The Division also has responsibility for the commercial bus service permit system in NI, which regulates operators delivering services that are distinct from those detailed in the Department's service level agreement with Translink.

The Division also acts in a co-ordination role for DfI Programme for Government.

Safe and Sustainable Transport

This Division aims to help everyone to connect safely, no matter how they travel and to enable and encourage shifts to more sustainable modes of travel. It contributes to the reduction of road casualties through monitoring and oversight of the Road Safety Strategy to 2020, by developing policies to address poor road user behaviours and by working with schools and communities to promote road safety. It is also involved in regulating vehicles and drivers and the taxi industry. At the same time, it encourages and enables an increased take up of sustainable travel, particularly walking and cycling, by taking forward the Bicycle Strategy, developing urban bicycle network plans, a strategic plan for greenways, a small grants programme for greenways and the active school travel programme. It also manages a number of inland waterways assets and is the Sponsor for Waterways Ireland.

Roads And Rivers

DfI Roads

DfI Roads maintains, develops and manages the road network to facilitate the safe and convenient movement of people and goods. DfI Roads is also responsible for the delivery

of transport projects including Belfast Rapid Transit and the Strategic Park & Ride Delivery Programme 2016-2020.

Maintenance includes a wide range of activities from major reconstruction and resurfacing of road surfaces to the everyday upkeep of the network, such as grass cutting, cleaning gullies, repairing or cleaning road signs and timely salting of roads in preparation for winter conditions. These activities aim to ensure user safety and minimise the potential for more expensive maintenance at a later stage.

DfI Roads headquarters is in Belfast with four Divisional Headquarters, each headed by a Divisional Roads Manager, based in Coleraine, Craigavon, Belfast and Omagh.

To maintain close public liaison and facilitate management, each division operates through a number of section offices, responsible for the daily maintenance of roads in areas that, generally, coincide with local council areas.

Council Areas:

Northern: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council; and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Southern: Ards and North Down Borough Council; Newry, Mourne and Down District Council; Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

Eastern: Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.

Western: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council.

DfI Roads Claims Unit deals with property damage, personal injury and vehicle damage compensation claims made against the Department.

Parking Enforcement Unit

- Customer service / enquires / complaints / machine faults
Tel: 0845 603 9337
- Enforcement matters, Mitigating circumstances e.g. customer vehicle breakdown, lost keys, emergency etc – TransportNI Parking Enforcement Unit
Tel: 028 9054 0400
- Season tickets – (connects to NSL operator) Tel: 033 0008 8770
- Cashless parking (Parkmobile)

Blue Badge

If you think you may be entitled to a Blue Badge you can request an application form from:

Blue Badge Unit
Castle Barracks
Wellington Place
Enniskillen
BT74 7HN
tel: 0300 200 7818
fax: 028 6634 3730
email: bluebadges@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Or, you can complete an online application by visiting the website at the following link:-
Blue Badge online application

DfI Rivers

The primary aim of DfI Rivers is to manage flood risk to facilitate the social, economic and environmental development of Northern Ireland.

Under the terms of the Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973 the Department:

- has discretionary powers to maintain watercourses and sea defences which have been designated by the Drainage Council (see next section for further information on the Drainage Council);
- can construct and maintain drainage and sea defence structures; and,
- administers the advisory and enforcement procedures to protect the drainage function of all watercourses.

Rivers fulfils a key role in the implementation of the EU Floods Directive which provides the powers to take forward Flood Risk Management.

The Department is the Lead Government Department (LGD) for the coordination of certain flooding emergencies. Rivers provides expert guidance and information to assist in discharging these responsibilities. This is an important role as it supports the actions of government departments, councils and local communities.

Rivers provides secretariat and administrative support to the Drainage Council for Northern Ireland, a non-Departmental Public Body which carries out a general scrutiny on the drainage functions of the Department.

Rivers will be responsible for administering the Reservoirs (Northern Ireland) Act 2015, although not all powers in this legislation have been commenced.

DfI Rivers headquarters is in Cookstown with two regional offices based in Lisburn and Omagh.

NI Water

NI Water is a Government Owned Company and the Department is responsible for overall policy and legislation and sets strategic objectives through guidance. The actual delivery of water and sewerage services is, however, the responsibility of the Company, subject to regulatory oversight by the NI Authority for Utility Regulation and environmental regulators.

The Department monitors NI Water's business performance and engages with the Company Board, Chair and Executive Team on strategic and shareholder matters. The Department is responsible for paying customer subsidy to NI Water, making loans for investment and agreeing the Company's annual budget and operating plan.

The company also provides a dedicated telephone service for elected representatives of all levels to raise concerns. The number is 0845 300646, and should be used by elected representatives only.

Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC)

NITHC is a public corporation and the parent company of the publicly owned bus and rail companies in the region. These companies, NI Railways, Ulsterbus, and Citybus (trading as Metro) operate under the brand name of Translink. NITHC's statutory duties are to **manage** public transport properties and to oversee the activities of Translink. Under the Transport Act 2011 Translink is responsible for the delivery of most of the public passenger transport services in the region. This is managed through the five year Service Agreement in place between the Department and NITHC.

The Department is also responsible for setting specific targets for NITHC and monitoring the

extent to which these targets are achieved. Furthermore, NITHC are also responsible for ensuring that appropriate financial and management controls are in place and that compliance with those controls is effectively monitored.

Northern Ireland Trust Ports

Public Trust Ports are autonomous, self-financing statutory bodies whose constitutions are set out in legislation. They operate on a commercial basis with the profit generated by their activities re-invested to improve their facilities. There are five commercial ports in the region – four Public Trust Ports (Belfast, Derry, Warrenpoint and Coleraine) and one in private ownership (Larne).

The Department is responsible for ports policy and the legislative framework within which all ports (excluding fishery harbours) operate in the region.

Aviation

Aviation, in general terms, is a reserved matter. However, the Department has a statutory role on certain matters pertaining to the management of airports. Its functions are set down in the Airports (Northern Ireland) Order 1994.

Waterways Ireland

The Department is the sponsor department in the region for Waterways Ireland (WI) which is the Cross-Border Body responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of operational waterways throughout the island of Ireland. Waterways Ireland is co-sponsored by the Department for Infrastructure and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (**DCHG**).

The statutory function of Waterways Ireland is the management, maintenance,

development and restoration of the inland navigable waterways system throughout the island, principally for recreational purposes. Waterways Ireland has responsibility for approximately 1,000km of navigable waterways, comprising;

- The Barrow Navigation;
- The Erne System;
- The Grand Canal;
- The Lower Bann Navigation;
- The Royal Canal;
- The Shannon-Erne Waterway; and,
- The Shannon Navigation.

The Drainage Council

The Drainage Council is an advisory non-Departmental Public Body which carries out a general scrutiny role on the drainage functions of the Department. It has a statutory duty to ensure uniformity of treatment of drainage throughout Northern Ireland and to scrutinise associated environmental impact assessments. It is the Council's responsibility to decide which watercourses and sea defences should be maintained by Rivers at public expense.

The constitution and proceedings of the Drainage Council are provided for by Article 3(1) and Schedule 1 to the Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973. This presently provides that the Council shall consist of 18 members appointed by the Minister, of which 10 are district council representatives.

The Council was reconstituted in 2016 and current members have been appointed to 2019. The Council meets two or three times per annum and is supported by a secretariat provided by the Department which adheres to the Department's governance processes and procedures.

Department of Justice



The Department of Justice was established in April 2010, following the devolution of justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Programme for Government (PfG) 2016-2020

The Programme for Government 2016-2020 has adopted the Outcomes Based Accountability model and the Department of Justice has been tasked with leading PfG Outcome 7:

“We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other”.

The three key messages are:

- The Department of Justice is working to keep communities safe and reduce crime.
- The Department of Justice is working to make the justice system more effective.
- The Department of Justice is working to reduce reoffending.

Organisation and structure

The Department has a range of powers relating to devolved policing and justice functions, set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

It is responsible for the resourcing, legislative and policy framework of the justice system. It is headed by a Permanent Secretary, Peter May, and has the following four Directorates to deliver on these priorities:

Access to Justice – The Access to Justice Directorate, headed by David Lavery, is the

Department’s policy and legislation hub. Covering Criminal Justice, Civil Justice (although some aspects of civil law remain with other NI Departments), Brexit Co-ordination and Legal Aid, the Directorate manages the greater part of the Department’s legislation programme.

Safer Communities – Community Safety Directorate, headed by Anthony Harbinson, has responsibility for the resourcing, policy and legislative framework for policing and community safety and for leading on security within the Northern Ireland Executive.

Justice Delivery – Justice Delivery Directorate, headed by Lianne Patterson, is responsible for helping the Department of Justice to meet its objectives through the provision of high quality customer focused corporate services. The Directorate’s role is pivotal in resource management and promoting ‘Value For Money’ in the Department. Its work includes specialist support within the key areas of Finance, Human Resource management, Records management, Audit, Procurement and Information and Communication Technologies, Compensation Services for victims of crime, and support to the DoJ Board. In addition, it provides support to the Minister through the Private Office and Press Office functions.

Reducing Offending – Reducing Offending Directorate (ROD), headed by Ronnie Armour, is comprised of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, Youth Justice Agency and has lead responsibility for policy aimed at reducing reoffending among children and adults.

The Department leads on work under Outcome 7 ‘we have a safe community where we respect the law and each other’ and ROD is responsible for setting priorities for Performance Indicator 39 Reducing Reoffending.

Agencies

The Department has five Agencies

The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is an agency within the Department of Justice. It is responsible for the operation and delivery of services within the Northern Ireland prison system. The overall aim of the Northern Ireland Prison Service is to improve public safety by reducing the risk of re-offending through the management and rehabilitation of offenders in custody. The Prison Service, through its staff, serves the community by keeping in secure, safe and humane custody those committed by the courts and, by working with prisoners and with other organisations, seeks to reduce the risk of re-offending and in so doing aims to protect the public and to contribute to peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is an executive agency of the Department of Justice. It provides administrative support to the Northern Ireland courts and tribunals, and to the Judiciary; enforces civil court judgments through the Enforcement of Judgments Office and sponsors the work of the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission.

Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) is responsible for the provision of scientific analysis, advice and support to enhance the delivery of justice. The Agency is operationally independent from all other criminal justice organisations and supports the investigations of PSNI, the Police Ombudsman, HMRC and the State Pathologist and provides objective expert evidence to both Criminal and Coroner's courts.

Youth Justice Agency: The Youth Justice Agency (YJA) is an executive agency of the Department of Justice responsible for preventing offending by children and young people through delivery of a range

of community based, court ordered and diversionary interventions, youth conferencing and the provision of custody where necessary.

The Department also sponsors a number of Non-Departmental Public Bodies/bodies affiliated with policing and justice.

Criminal Justice Inspection NI (CJINI)

The role of CJINI is to inspect or ensure the inspection of all aspects of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland, including the courts. CJINI is an independent statutory inspectorate with responsibility for inspecting all aspects of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland except for the judiciary. It also inspects a number of other agencies and organisations that link into the criminal justice system. CJINI uses inspection to help strengthen public confidence in the agencies that make up the criminal justice system.

CJINI is also one of four designated organisations in Northern Ireland involved with the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) which ensures the rights of those in places of detention such as prisons and police custody.”

It endeavours through its work to promote the effectiveness, efficiency and even-handedness of the criminal justice system. It also seeks to secure improvement and greater co-operation between the various statutory and voluntary organisations to provide a better justice system for the whole community in Northern Ireland.

It is responsible for ensuring the inspection of all aspects of the criminal justice system under the statutory basis which it was established. CJINI must, according to the Criminal Justice Review of 2000, present its inspection reports to the Minister of Justice, the responsible Minister (if the inspected agency is the responsibility of another Minister) and the relevant departmental committee or standing committee.

It must also publish its reports and make them widely and readily available and must also publish an Annual Report of its activities. This report must also be presented to the Minister of Justice and be laid before the relevant departmental and standing committees. CJINI also has a responsibility for advising Ministers on standards within Northern Ireland's criminal justice agencies, though standard setting remains the prerogative of Ministers.

NI Policing Board (NIPB)

The Policing Board was established on 4 November 2001 under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and is made up of 19 Members - 10 Political and 9 Independent. It is the role of the Board to independently oversee policing in Northern Ireland and to hold the Chief Constable to account for the exercise of his functions and those of the police service in an open and transparent manner.

The work of the Board is wide ranging in respect of its statutory duties which include measures to ensure effective oversight and monitoring of the work of the police and encouraging the engagement of the community with the police. For example through:

- the development and monitoring of the Annual Policing Plan, which is the key document for policing in Northern Ireland setting the objectives, performance indicators and targets for an effective and efficient police service;
- monitoring police performance in delivering key strategies - including Human Resources (recruitment and composition; training and development and Diversity); Finance; Information and Communication Systems; the police estate; Policing with the Community; and Community Engagement;
- monitoring the compliance of the police with the Human Rights Act,

which includes the development and monitoring of the Code of Ethics which governs the conduct of police officers;

- negotiating the annual budget for policing and scrutinising expenditure;
- oversight of the implementation of the remaining Patten recommendations;
- assessing the level of public satisfaction with the performance of the police and improving the performance of and assessing public satisfaction with DPP's, or with PCSP's;
- making arrangements to gain the cooperation of the public with the police in preventing crime; and ensuring arrangements are in place to secure continuous improvement with PSNI and the Board; and
- oversight role in respect of National Crime Agency (NCA). The day to day work of the NCA with the PSNI will be governed by a series of Memorandums of Understanding, all of which will be reviewed by the Board. The Board will hold the Chief Constable accountable for the authorisation of NCA operations.

NI Law Commission (NILC)

The Northern Ireland Law Commission was established in 2007 following the recommendations of the Criminal Justice Review Group, under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 (as amended by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010). The Commission is an independent advisory, non-departmental public body (NDPB). Their main task is to review areas of the law and to make recommendations for reform. The Commission seeks to ensure that the law is as simple, accessible, fair, modern and cost-effective as possible.

The Minister of Justice decided to significantly reduce funding to the Northern Ireland Law Commission from April 2015 as a response to budget pressures within the Department

of Justice. This will allow only essential law reform to continue.

NI Police Fund

The Northern Ireland Police Fund was set up in late 2001 as a government response to the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland. The Fund was to be able to supplement the income of those on very low pensions, help finance the procurement of better prostheses or household equipment for the disabled and make grants to universities for research or for bursaries for disabled officers who wish to study. The NIPF offers assistance and support to injured police officers, injured retired officers and their families arising as a direct result of terrorism in Northern Ireland.

The NIPF is a Statutory Body of the Department of Justice under the Northern Ireland Police Fund Regulations 2016. The Fund is a company limited by guarantee and on the 1 April 2005 it was classified as an Executive Non Departmental Public Body.

Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland was established under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. The Office was established on 6 November 2000 by virtue the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 (Commencement) Order (Northern Ireland) 2000. The Office is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the Department of Justice (DOJ). The Office is not governed by a Board, but is headed by a Police Ombudsman as a Corporation Sole who is appointed by Royal Warrant and normally serves for a period of seven years. The Office of the Police Ombudsman is constituted and operates independently of the Department of Justice, the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Office is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly and is required to have regard to

any guidance given by the Department of Justice.

The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland provides an independent, impartial police complaints system for the people and the police of Northern Ireland. It investigates complaints against the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Belfast Harbour Police, the Larne Harbour Police, the Belfast International Airport Police and Ministry of Defence Police in Northern Ireland and the National Crime Agency, when its staff operates within the jurisdiction. The Office is also responsible for the investigation of complaints made against Customs and Immigration officials whilst exercising the powers of a Constable in Northern Ireland.

The Police Ombudsman investigates complaints about the conduct of police officers and, where appropriate, makes recommendations in respect of criminal, disciplinary and misconduct matters. The Police Ombudsman's Office is required by law to strive to deliver a police complaints system in which the public and police officers can have confidence.

Parole Commissioners

The Parole Commissioners are an independent body who make decisions on the release and recall of all life sentence and public protection sentence prisoners in Northern Ireland. They also make decisions on the recall and further release of determinate custodial sentenced prisoners. (The Parole Commissioners replace the Life Sentence Review Commissioners, the previous body that existed for that purpose). With effect from 1 May 2012 the PCNI have been re-positioned to the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service.

The role of the Parole Commissioners is defined by the legislation under which they operate. Chapter 7 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 states that in discharging their

functions, including those defined in the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001, the Parole Commissioners shall:

- (a) have due regard to the need to protect the public from serious harm; and*
- (b) have regard to the desirability of -*
 - (i) securing the rehabilitation of prisoners; and*
 - (ii) preventing the commission of further offences by prisoners.*

The Parole Commissioners are required to advise the DOJ in regard to any matter connected with the release or recall of prisoners referred to them under the Order or under the Life Sentences (NI) Order 2001.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT)

The Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body of the Department of Justice. The functions of PRRT are set out in the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014. PRRT provides assistance to police officers and former police officers and their families with clinical and support services. The services include:

- Coaching and Development Services
- Training and Education Programmes
- Psychological Therapies
- Physiotherapy

The Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
The Prisoner Ombudsman is appointed by the Minister of Justice for Northern Ireland and is completely independent of the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS). The Prisoner Ombudsman's Office was set up in 2005. Since February 2010, visitors to prisoners in Northern Ireland have been able to refer their complaints to the Prisoner Ombudsman once the complaint has first been responded to by the Prison Service.

The Prisoner Ombudsman investigates:

- Complaints from prisoners held in Northern Ireland;
- Complaints from visitors to prisoners held in Northern Ireland; and
- Deaths in Prison Service custody in Northern Ireland

Probation Board

The Probation Board is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the Department of Justice (DOJ). Its role is to support the Minister for Justice to help keep the people of Northern Ireland safe by helping to reduce crime and the harm it does. Their work involves:

- Assessing convicted offenders and annually preparing reports for Courts, Parole Commissioners and others.
- Supervision of offenders subject to a range of court orders and licences at any given time.
- Delivering behavioural change programmes for offenders in custody and in the community covering area such as violent offending, sexual offending and drug and alcohol misuse.
- Providing a Victim Information Scheme to any person who has been the direct victim of a criminal offence, where the offender is subject to supervision by PBNI.
- Working alongside statutory and other partners to minimise the risk of harm posed by offenders.

RUC George Cross Foundation

The Foundation was created by virtue of Section 70 of the Police (NI) Act 2000 for the purpose of "marking the sacrifices and honouring the achievements of the Royal Ulster Constabulary". It commenced work in December 2001.

The functions of the Foundation allow it to look back on a long, proud history of policing and to look forward by supporting current serving officers. In particular, it will remember sacrifice

and service and preserve the name of the RUC GC in the policing world.

A Memorial Garden, situated at Brooklyn, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, provides a major tribute to policing in Ireland. It, in particular, marks the service and sacrifice of RUC officers and offers a unique three-dimensional experience unparalleled anywhere in the world.

The George Cross Foundation has responsibility for the upkeep of this Garden and will also have responsibility for a new purpose built policing museum. Visits to the Garden can be arranged by contacting the GC Foundation.

Legal Services Agency NI (LSANI)

The Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI) is an Executive Agency of the Department of Justice and was established on 1 April 2015, upon the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC).

The Agency operates under the direction and control of the Minister of Justice but has operational independence when determining whether applicants should receive civil legal services. All funding decisions are based solely on the statutory tests which govern the financial eligibility of applicants and the legal merits of individual cases.

While the judiciary is responsible for the granting of criminal legal aid, LSANI also pays for the corresponding legal services provided.

The LSA funds and makes payments to the legal profession for services provided under both the criminal and civil legal aid schemes while attaining value for money. The LSA's functions include:

- considering applications for advice, assistance, and representation which is known as civil legal services;
- assessing and making payments of bills received for civil legal services and criminal legal aid;

- supporting the DoJ in the development and implementation of a legal aid reform programme;
- supporting the independent appeals function; implementing directions and guidance issued by the DoJ; and
- maintaining and developing systems, procedures and relationships which support all of its key activities and the wider strategic aims of the DoJ.

The LSA administers legal aid for Northern Ireland but cannot offer legal advice to members of the public. As an Agency within the DoJ, the LSA cannot recommend or refer you to a particular solicitor who may be able to assist you.

The Law Society of Northern Ireland represents and regulates the solicitors' profession in Northern Ireland. Whilst the Law Society is not a legal advice centre and cannot offer legal advice of a specific or general nature, the Law Society maintains a Solicitors Directory, which can be used to search for a solicitor in your area. The directory can be accessed using this link to the Law Society website: www.lawsoc-ni.org/solicitors

Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBS)

The role of the IMBs is to visit prisons regularly and report to the Minister of Justice on the conditions of imprisonment and the treatment of prisoners in NI Prisons. IMBs (formerly known as the Board of Visitors) cover the three prison establishments in Northern Ireland which includes Maghaberry Prison, Magilligan Prison and Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison.

Members of each IMB are drawn from the general public. IMB members act as independent observers of all aspects of the prison regime and as such have free access at all times to the prison to which they are appointed. The work is voluntary and unpaid.

Appendix

Central Government Department and Agencies Contact Directory

The Executive Office



TEO,
Stormont Castle
Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3TT
Telephone: **028 90378055**
Email function available through website
www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury
Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP
T: **028 9050 0600**
F: **028 9050 0589**
Textphone: **028 9050 0589**
E: **information@equalityni.org**
www.equalityni.org

Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Contacts)



DAERA Headquarters:

Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards
Road, Ballymiscaw, Belfast, BT4 SB
Telephone: **0300 200 7850**
(if you know the name of the individual)
Telephone: **0300 200 7852**
(customer service helpline)
Email: **daera.helpline@daera-ni.gov.uk**

Ballykelly House, 111 Ballykelly Avenue,
Drummond, Limavady, BT49 9HP
Telephone: **0300 200 7879**
(customer service helpline)
Email: **daera.helpline@daera-ni.gov.uk**

Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue, Gasworks
Business Park, Belfast BT7 2JA
Telephone: **0300 200 7856**
(customer service helpline)
Email: **nieainfo@daera-ni.gov.uk**

If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact
the Department via Text Relay. Making a
call from a textphone dial **18001 + number**.
Making a call from a telephone dial **18002 +**
number.

Animal health & welfare and veterinary public health

Information and services relating to livestock
movements, trade, animal welfare, veterinary
public health, and the prevention and control
of animal diseases.
Telephone: **0300 200 7840**

Cattle registration line

Registration of cattle births and deaths by
telephone.
Telephone: **0300 200 7855**

DAERA corporate services

DAERA Headquarters, Press Office,
information services and systems, human
resources and facilities management.
Telephone: **0300 200 7850**

Calls from non-UK numbers or networks/
international calls should contact:
+44(0) 28 9049 5780.

Education and training

Education and training courses provided by CAFRE.

Telephone: **0300 200 7841**

Environment

Agri-environment schemes. Countryside Management advice including Cross-Compliance, Nitrates Directive, Codes of Good Agriculture Practice, Farm Waste Management, Uncultivated Land Regulations and Field Boundary Removals.

Telephone: 0300 200 7842

Farming

Livestock. Crops. Horticulture. Plant health. Equine. Organic farming. Farm business management. Information technology and online services.

Telephone: **0300 200 7843**

Fisheries

Aquaculture. Sea fisheries. Fish health. Foyle, Carlingford & Irish Lights Commission.

Telephone: **0300 200 7844**

Food

Knowledge and technology transfer. Marketing support to food businesses. Food industry training. Food Business Incubation Centre. Food Safety. Product certification. Marketing and quality standards.

Telephone: **0300 200 7846**

Forests

Timber production and marketing. Plant health controls for wood and bark, Woodland grants (including Short Rotation Coppice). Recreation. Educational visits. For caravanning

and camping bookings you will need to book directly with the Forest Park.

Telephone: **0300 200 7847**

Grants and funding

Basic Payment Scheme, agri-environment, farm, fisheries, forestry and rural development payments and grants, pre-2015 schemes.

Telephone: **0300 200 7848**

Inland Fisheries

Management of the Public Angling Estate and the sustainable management of the fishery resource.

Telephone **0300 200 7860**

Rural development

Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, Rural and community development, Farm diversification, Rural Champion, Rural Proofing, Rural White Paper.

Telephone: **0300 200 7849**

Other key contacts:

DAERA Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Forest Service

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute

Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland

Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

Farm Safety (NSENl)

Department for Communities



Department for Communities
Headquarters, Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast, BT2 7EG
T: **028 9082 9000**

Local Government and
Housing Regulation Division
Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast, BT2 7EG
E: lghrd.secretariat@communities-ni.gov.uk

Department for the Economy

Contact:



Department for the Economy
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast
BT4 2JP
Telephone: **028 9052 9900**
Text Relay: **18001 028 9052 9900**
Email: dfemail@economy-ni.gov.uk
Website: www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Contact:

Invest NI
Bedford Square, Bedford Street
Belfast, BT2 7ES
Phone: **028 9069 8000**
Fax: **028 9043 6536**
Email: ceo@investni.com
Website: www.investni.com

Tourism NI
Floors 10-12
Linum Chambers
Bedford Square, Bedford Street
Belfast, BT2 7ES
Telephone: **028 9023 1221**
Email: info@tourismni.com
Website: www.tourismni.com

Contact:

HSENI
83 Ladas Drive
Belfast, BT6 9FR
Telephone: Helpline: **0800 032 0121**
(Monday to Thursday: 9.00 am to 5.00 pm,
Friday: 9.00 am to 4.30 pm)
Office: **028 9024 3249**
Fax: **028 9023 5383**
Email: mail@hseni.gov.uk
Website: www.hseni.gov.uk

Contact:

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland
Floor 3
Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street
Belfast, BT2 8EN
Phone: 028 9025 1600 / Complaints: 0800
121 6022
Fax: 028 9025 1663
Email: info@consumercouncil.org.uk
Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Contact:

NI Screen
3rd Floor
Alfred House
21 Alfred Street
Belfast, BT2 8ED
Telephone: **028 9023 2444**
Fax: **028 9023 9918**
Email: info@northernirelandscreen.co.uk
Website: www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk

Headquarters

Labour Relations Agency
2 - 16 Gordon Street
Belfast, BT1 2LG
Telephone: **028 9032 1442**

Regional Offi

LRA
1-3 Guildhall Street
Londonderry, BT48 6BJ
Telephone: **028 7126 9639**
Email: **info@lra.org.uk**
Website: **lra.org.uk**

Construction Industry Training Board NI
Nutts Corner Training Centre
17 Dundrod Road
Crumlin, BT29 4SR
Telephone: **028 9082 5466**
Fax: **028 9082 5693**
Email: **info@citbni.org.uk**
Website: **www.citbni.org.uk**

Industrial Court
Room 203
Adelaide House
39 - 49 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8FD
Telephone: **028 9025 7599**
(Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm)
Fax: **028 9025 7555**
Email: **enquiries@industrialcourt.gov.uk**
Website: **www.industrialcourt.gov.uk**

Office of the Industrial Tribunals and the Fair
Employment Tribunal
Killymeal House
2 Cromac Quay
Ormeau Road
Belfast. BT7 2JD
Telephone: **028 9032 7666**
Fax: **028 9025 0100**
Email: **mail@employmenttribunalsni.org**
Website: **www.employmenttribunalsni.co.uk**

Certification Officer for Northern Ireland
10-16 Gordon Street
Belfast, BT1 2LG
Telephone: **028 9023 7773**
Email: **info@nicertoffice.org.**
Fax: **028 9023 2271**
Text phone: **028 9023 8411**
Website: **www.nicertoffice.org.**

Queen's University Belfast

University Road
Belfast, BT7 1NN
Telephone: **028 9024 5133**
Website: **www.qub.ac.uk**

Ulster University

Belfast Campus
Ulster University
York Street
Belfast
Co. Antrim, BT15 1ED
Telephone: **028 7012 3456**
Website: **www.ulster.ac.uk**

Coleraine Campus

Ulster University
Cromore Road
Coleraine
Co. Londonderry, BT52 1SA
Telephone: **028 7012 3456**
Website: **www.ulster.ac.uk**

Jordanstown Campus

Ulster University
Shore Road
Newtownabbey
Co. Antrim, BT37 0QB
Telephone: **028 7012 3456**
Website: **www.ulster.ac.uk**

Magee Campus

Ulster University
Northland Road
Londonderry
Co. Londonderry, BT48 7JL
Telephone: **028 7012 3456**
Website: **www.ulster.ac.uk**

Birmingham (Branch campus)

5th Floor
Centre City
5-7 Hill Street
Birmingham, B5 4UA
Telephone: **0845 0747965**
Website: **www.ulster.ac.uk**

London (Branch campus)

St James' House
10 Rosebery Avenue, Holborn
London, EC1R 4TF
Telephone: **0845 0747965**
Website: **www.ulster.ac.uk**

The Open University

110 Victoria Street
Belfast, BT1 3GN
Telephone: 028 9032 3722
Email: northernireland@open.ac.uk
Website: www.open.ac.uk

St Mary's University College

191 Falls Road
Belfast, BT12 6FE
Telephone: 028 9032 7678
Fax: 028 9033 3719
Website: www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk

Stranmillis University College

Stranmillis Road
Belfast, BT9 5DY
Telephone: **028 9038 1271**
Fax: **028 9038 4444**
Email: info@stran.ac.uk
Website: **www.stran.ac.uk**

Belfast Metropolitan College

Titanic Quarter Campus
7 Queens Road
Belfast, BT3 9DT
Telephone: 028 9026 5000
Email: studentportal@belfastmet.ac.uk
Fax: 028 9026 5101
Website: www.belfastmet.ac.uk

Millfield Campu

125–153 Millfield
Belfast, BT1 1HS
Phone: 028 9026 5000
Email: studentportal@belfastmet.ac.uk
Fax: 028 9026 5401
Website: www.belfastmet.ac.uk

Castlereagh Campus

Montgomery Road
Belfast, BT6 9JD
Telephone: **028 9026 5000**
Email: studentportal@belfastmet.ac.uk
Fax: **028 9040 1820**
Website: **www.belfastmet.ac.uk**

Springvale Campus

e3 Building
398 Springfield Road
Belfast, BT12 7DU
Phone: **028 9026 5200**
Email: studentportal@belfastmet.ac.uk
Fax: **028 9026 5001**
Website: **www.belfastmet.ac.uk**

South West College**Cookstown Campus**

Burn Road, Cookstown
Co. Tyrone, BT80 8DN
Telephone: **0845 603 1881**
Email: enquiries@swc.ac.uk
Fax: **028 8676 1818**
Text number: **028 8772 0625**
(for deaf and hard of hearing users only)
Website: **www.swc.ac.uk**

Dungannon Campus

Circular Road
Dungannon
Co.Tyrone, BT71 6BQ
Telephone: **0845 603 1881**
Email: **enquiries@swc.ac.uk**
Fax: **028 8775 2018**
Text number: **028 8772 0625**
(for deaf and hard of hearing users only)
Website: **www.swc.ac.uk**

Enniskillen Campus

Fairview
1 Dublin Road
Co.Fermanagh, BT74 6AE
Telephone: **0845 603 1881**
Email: **enquiries@swc.ac.uk**
Fax: **028 6632 6357**
Text number: **028 6631 2278**
(for deaf and hard of hearing users only)
Website: **www.swc.ac.uk**

Omagh Campus

2 Mountjoy Road
Omagh
Co.Tyrone , BT79 7AH
Telephone: **0845 603 1881**
Email: **enquiries@swc.ac.uk**
Fax: **028 8224 1440**
Text number: **028 8225 5237**
(for deaf and hard of hearing users only)
Website: **www.swc.ac.uk**

Technology & Skills Centre

Killyhevlin Industrial Estate,
Enniskillen, BT74 4EJ

Northern Regional College**Ballymena (Trostan Avenue) Campus**

Trostan Avenue Building
Ballymena
Co Antrim, BT43 7BN
Telephone: **028 2563 6221**
Fax: **028 2565 9245**
Website: **www.nrc.ac.uk**

Ballymena (Farm Lodge) Campus

Farm Lodge Buildings
Ballymena
Co Antrim, BT43 7DF
Telephone: **028 2565 2871**
Fax: **028 2563 1353**
Website: **www.nrc.ac.uk**

Ballymoney Campus

2 Coleraine Road
Ballymoney
Co Antrim, BT53 6BP
Telephone: **028 2766 0401**
Fax: **028 2766 4529**
Website: **www.nrc.ac.uk**

Coleraine Campus

Union Street
Coleraine
Co Londonderry, BT52 1QA
Telephone: **028 7035 4717**
Fax: **028 7035 6377**
Website: **www.nrc.ac.uk**

Larne Campus

32-34 Pound Street
Larne
Co Antrim, BT40 1SQ

for all enquiries contact:

Newtownabbey Campus

Telephone: **028 9085 5000**
Fax: **028 9086 2076**
Website: **www.nrc.ac.uk**

Magherafelt Campus

22 Moneymore Road,
Magherafelt,
Co Londonderry, BT45 6AE
Telephone: **028 7963 2462**
Fax: **028 9086 2076**
Website: **www.nrc.ac.uk**

Newtownabbey Campus

400 Shore Road
Newtownabbey
Co Antrim, BT37 9RS
Telephone: **028 9085 5000**
Fax: **028 9086 2076**
Website: **www.nrc.ac.uk**

North West Regional College**Londonderry Campus**

Strand Road
Londonderry, BT48 7AL
Telephone: **028 7127 6000**
Text number: **028 7127 6167**
(for deaf and hard of hearing users only)
Fax: **028 7126 0520**
Email: **info@nwrc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.nwrc.ac.uk**

Limavady Campus

Main Street
Limavady, BT49 0EX
Telephone: **028 7127 8700**
Text number: **028 7776 7337**
(for deaf and hard of hearing users only)
Fax: **028 7776 1018**
Email: **info@nwrc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.nwrc.ac.uk**

Strabane Campus

Derry Road
Strabane, BT82 8DX
Telephone: **028 7138 2317**
Fax: **028 7138 3501**
Email: **info@nwrc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.nwrc.ac.uk**

South Eastern Regional College**Ballynahinch Campus**

Church Street
Ballynahinch, BT24 8LP
Telephone: **028 4461 5815**
Fax: **028 9756 5637**
Email: **info@serc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.serc.ac.uk**

Bangor Campus

Castle Park Road
Bangor, BT20 4TD
Telephone: **028 9127 6600**
Fax: **028 9127 6601**
Email: **info@serc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.serc.ac.uk**

Downpatrick Campus

Market Street
Downpatrick, BT30 6ND
Telephone: **028 4461 5815**
Fax: **028 4461 5817**
Email: **info@serc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.serc.ac.uk**

Lisburn campus

Castle Street
Lisburn, BT27 4SU
Telephone: **028 9267 7225**
Fax: **028 9267 7291**
Email: **info@serc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.serc.ac.uk**

Newcastle Campus

Castlewellan Road
Newcastle, BT33 0UR
Telephone: **028 4461 5815**
Fax: **028 4372 6203**
Email: **info@serc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.serc.ac.uk**

Newtownards Campus

Victoria Avenue
Newtownards, BT23 7ED
Telephone: **028 9127 6800**
Fax: **028 9127 6801**
Email: **info@serc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.serc.ac.uk**

Carrowdore Out-Centre

Manse Road
Carrowdore, BT22 2EY
Telephone: **028 9127 6600**
Fax: **028 9127 6601**
Email: **info@serc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.serc.ac.uk**

Hollywood Out-Centre

Old Hollywood Road
Hollywood, BT18 9QH
Telephone: **028 9127 6600**
Fax: **028 9127 6601**
Email: **info@serc.ac.uk**
Website: **www.serc.ac.uk**

Southern Regional College**Armagh Campus**

Lonsdale Building
College Hill
Armagh, BT61 7HN
Telephone: **0300 123 1223**
Fax: **028 3751 2844**
Email: **info@src.ac.uk**
Website: **www.src.ac.uk**

Banbridge Campus

Castlewellan Road
Banbridge, BT32 4AY
Telephone: **0300 123 1223**
Fax: **028 3839 7701**
Email: **info@src.ac.uk**
Website: **www.src.ac.uk**

Kilkeel Campus

Greencastle Street
Kilkeel, BT34 4BH
Telephone: **0300 123 1223**
Fax: **028 4176 5975**
Email: **info@src.ac.uk**
Website: **www.src.ac.uk**

Lurgan Campus

Kitchen Hill
Lurgan, BT66 6AZ
Telephone: **0300 123 1223**
Fax: **028 3839 7801**
Email: **info@src.ac.uk**
Website: **www.src.ac.uk**

Newry Campus

Patrick Street
Newry, BT35 8DN
Telephone: **0300 123 1223**
Fax: **028 3026 6556**
Email: **info@src.ac.uk**
Website: **www.src.ac.uk**

Portadown Campus

36 Lurgan Road
Portadown, BT63 5BL
Telephone: **0300 123 1223**
Fax: **028 3839 7751**
Email: **info@src.ac.uk**
Website: **www.src.ac.uk**

InterTradeIreland

The Trade and Business Development Body
The Old Gasworks Business Park
Kilmorey Street
Newry, Co. Down, BT34 2DE
Telephone: **028 3083 4100**
Textphone: **028 3083 4169**
Fax: **028 3083 4155**
Email: **info@intertradeireland.com**
Website: **www.intertradeireland.com**

Tourism Ireland

Beresford House
2 Beresford Road
Coleraine, BT52 1GE
T: **028 7035 9200**
F: **028 7032 6932**
E: **corporate.coleraine@tourismireland.com**
W: **www.tourismireland.com**

Department for Education



Department of
Education
www.education-ni.gov.uk

Contact:
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor, BT19 7PR
Telephone: **028 9127279**
Email: **DE.DEWebMail@education-ni.gov.uk**
Website: **www.education-ni.gov.uk**

Department for Finance

Department of Finance
Clare House



Department of
Finance
www.finance-ni.gov.uk

303 Airport Road
Belfast, BT3 9ED
Telephone: **028 9185 8111**
Email: **dof.enquiries@finance-ni.gov.uk**
Website: **www.finance-ni.gov.uk**

Department for Health



Department of
Health
www.health-ni.gov.uk

Castle Buildings, Stormont
Belfast, BT4 3SG
Telephone: **02890520500**
Email: **webmaster@health-ni.gov.uk**
Website: **www.health-ni.gov.uk**

Area Headquarters

Northern Area Headquarters

22-26 Waveney Road,
Ballymena, BT43 5BA
Telephone: **028 2564 3370**
Fax: **028 2564 5673**
Email: **northern@nifrs.org**

Western Area Headquarters

10 Crescent Link,
Londonderry, BT47 5FR
Telephone: **028 7131 1162**
Fax: **028 7134 1926**
Email: **western@nifrs.org**

Eastern Area Headquarters

6 Bankmore Street,
Belfast, BT7 1AQ
Telephone: **028 9031 0360**
Fax: **028 9031 3226**
Email: **eastern@nifrs.org**

Southern Headquarters

Thomas Street,
Portadown, BT62 3AH
Telephone: **028 3839 4690**
Fax: **028 3835 0341**
Email: **southern@nifrs.org**

The Chief Executive:
Health and Social Care Board Headquarters
12-22 Linenhall Street
Belfast, BT2 8BS
Email: **Enquiry.hscb@hscni.net**

Local Commissioning Groups (LCG's):

Belfast LCG

12-22 Linenhall Street,
Belfast, BT2 8BS
Email: **Belfast.lcg@hscni.net**

Telephone: **0300 555 0115**

South Eastern LCG

12-22 Linenhall Street,

Belfast, BT2 8BS

Email: **Southeastern.lcg@hscni.net**

Telephone: **0300 555 0115**

Northern LCG

County Hall, 182 Galgorm Road,

Ballymena, BT42 1QB

Email: **Northern.lcg@hscni.net**

Telephone: **0300 555 0115**

Southern LCG

Tower Hill, Armagh, BT61 9DR

Email: **Southern.lcg@hscni.net**

Telephone: **028 3741 0041**

Western LCG

Gransha Park House, 15 Gransha Park,

Clooney Road, Londonderry, BT47 6FN

Email: **Western.lcg@hscni.net**

Telephone: **0300 555 0115**

Complaints: **Complaints.hscb@hscni.net**

Northern Ireland fire and Rescue Services

1 Seymour Street

Telephone: **02892664221**

Email: **enquiries@nifrs.org**

Website: **www.nifrs**



Department for

Infrastructure

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Department for Infrastructure

Department for Infrastructure

Departmental Coordination Unit

Clarence Court

10-18 Adelaide Street

Belfast, BT2 8GB

Email: **dcu@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Telephone: **028 9054 0540**

(Text relay prefix 18001)

Regional Planning Directorate

Clarence Court

10-18 Adelaide Street

Belfast, BT2 8GB

Email: **planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Telephone: **028 9054 0504**

(Text relay prefix 18001)

Strategic Planning Directorate

Clarence Court

10-18 Adelaide Street

Belfast BT2 2GB

Email: **planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Telephone: **028 9054 0540**

(Text relay prefix 18001)

DVA Headquarters

148-158 Corporation Street

Belfast, BT1 3DH

Email: **dva@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Website: **www.nidirect.gov.uk/motoring**

Driver and Vehicle Testing

66 Balmoral Road

Belfast, BT12 6QL

Telephone: **0300 200 7861**

Driver Licensing

County Hall

Castlerock Road

Coleraine

Co Londonderry, BT51 3HS

Telephone: **0300 00 7861**

Fax: **028 7034 1422**

Passenger & Transport Licensing

County Hall

Castlerock

Coleraine

Co Londonderry, BT51 3HS

Telephone: **028 9025 4100**

Transport Strategy Division

Tom Reid
Transport Strategy Division
Room 3- 01
Clarence Court
Belfast, BT2 8GB
Telephone: **028 9054 0034**

Moira Doherty
Public Transport Division
Room 3-29
Clarence Court
Belfast, BT2 8GB
Telephone: **028 9054 0018**

Safe and Sustainable Travel Division
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8GB
Email: **safeandsustainabletravel@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Contact:

**Divisional Headquarters:
Business Services Division**

Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8GB
Telephone: **028 9054 0201**
Email: **dfi oads.hq@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Divisional Headquarters:
Northern Division
County Hall
Castlerock Road
Coleraine; BT51 3HS
T: **0300 200 7891**
F: **028 7034 1430**
E: **dfi oads.northern@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Southern Division

Marlborough House
Central Way
Craigavon, BT64 1AD
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Fax: **028 3833 9820**
Email: **dfi oads.southern@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Eastern Division

Annex 7
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast, BT4 3SL
Telephone: **0300 200 7893**
Fax: **028 9025 3220**
Email: **dfi oads.eastern@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Western Division

County Hall
Drumragh Road
Omagh, BT79 7AF
Telephone: **0300 200 7894**
Fax: **028 8225 4010**
Email: **dfi oads.western@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Dfi Roads Claims Unit

Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8GB
Telephone: **0300 200 7810**
Fax: **028 9054 0665**
Email: **tnicu@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Enquiries about a parking ticket (PCN)

Tel: **0300 200 7895**
Online: **www.nidirect.gov.uk/challengeparkingticket**

In writing –
Parking Enforcement Processing Unit
PO Box 134
Coleraine, BT52 9AF

DfI Rivers Headquarters:

49 Tullywiggan Road
Loughry
Cookstown, BT80 8SG
Telephone: **028 8676 8300**
Email: **Rivers.Registry@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Regional office

Eastern Region

Ravarnet House
15 Altona Road
Largmore
Lisburn, BT27 5QB
Tel: **028 9260 6100**
Email: **Rivers.Lisburn@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Western Region

3A St Julians Road
Omagh, BT79 7HQ
Telephone: **028 8225 4900**
Email: **Rivers.Omagh@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Northern Ireland Water

Head Office
Westland House
Old Westland Road
Belfast, BT14 6TE
Telephone: **08457 440088**
Email: **waterline@niwater.com**
Website: **www.niwater.com**

Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company

Chamber of Commerce House
22 Great Victoria Street
Belfast, BT2 7LX
Telephone: **028 9024 3456**
Email: **info@translink.co.uk**
Website: **www.translink.co.uk**

Drainage Council for Northern Ireland

DfI Rivers Headquarters

49 Tullywiggan Road
Loughry
Cookstown, BT80 8SG
Telephone: **028 8676 8300**
Email: **Rivers.Registry@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Department for Justice



Central Co-ordination Division, Central
Management Unit, Castle Buildings,
Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SG
Telephone: **028 90 765784**
Email: **info@cmu@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk**
Website: **www.dojni.gov.uk**

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

Block 1, Knockview Buildings, Stormont
Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SJ
Telephone: **028 90 258000**
Fax: **028 90 523689**
Email: **info@cjini.org**
Website: **www.cjini.org**

Northern Ireland Policing Board,

Waterside Tower, 31 Clarendon Road,
Clarendon Dock, Belfast, BT1 3BG
Telephone: **028 90 408500**
Fax: **028 90 408533**
Email: **information@nipolicingboard.org.uk**
Website: **www.nipolicingboard.org.uk**

Civil Justice Policy Division
Department of Justice
Massey House
Belfast, BT4 3SX
Email: **NILC@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk**

NI Policing Fund
Maryfield Complex,
100 Belfast Road,
Holywood BT18 9QY
Telephone: **028 90 393556**

Police Ombudsman Office
New Cathedral Buildings,
Writers' Square,
11 Church Street, Belfast BT1 1PG
Telephone: **0845 6012931** or **028 9082 8600**
Fax: **028 90 828659**
Minicom: **028 9082 8756**
Email: **info@policeombudsman.org**
Website: **www.policeombudsman.org**

Parole Commissioners
Linum Chambers
2 Bedford Square
Bedford Street,
Belfast, BT2 7ES
Telephone: **028 9054 5900**
Email: **info@parolecomni.x.gsi.gov.uk**
Website: **www.parolecomni.org.uk**

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust
Maryfield Complex,
100 Belfast Road,
Holywood, BT18 9QY
Telephone: **028 9042 7788**
Fax: **028 9039 3578**
Text Relay: Dial **18001 028 9042 7788**
Clinical enquiries
Email: **clinicaladmin@prrt.org**
Coaching and Development/Training enquiries
Email: **training@prrt.org**

The Prisoner Ombudsman for NI
Unit 2, Walled Garden,
Stormont Estate,
Belfast, BT4 3SH
Telephone: **028 9052 7771**
Fax: **028 9052 7752**
Freephone: **0800 7836317**
Probation Board for Northern Ireland
80-90 North Street,
Belfast, BT1 1LD
Telephone: **028 9026 2400**
Fax: **028 9026 2436**
Textphone: **028 9026 2490**
Email: **info@pbni.gsi.gov.uk**

Royal Ulster Constabulary GC Foundation
Brooklyn,
65 Knock Road,
Belfast, BT5 6LE
Telephone: **028 9070 0116**
Fax: **028 9056 1516**
rucgcfoundation@nics.gov.uk

The Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland
2nd Floor, Waterfront Plaza,
8 Laganbank Road,
Mays Meadow,
Belfast, BT1 3BN
Email: **enquiries@lsani.gov.uk**
Website: **www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/legal-aid**

IMB Secretariat
Room B4.13,
Castle Buildings,
Stormont Estate,
Belfast, BT4 3SG
Telephone: **028 9052 8580**
Email: **info@imb-ni.org.uk**
Website: **www.imb-ni.org.uk**

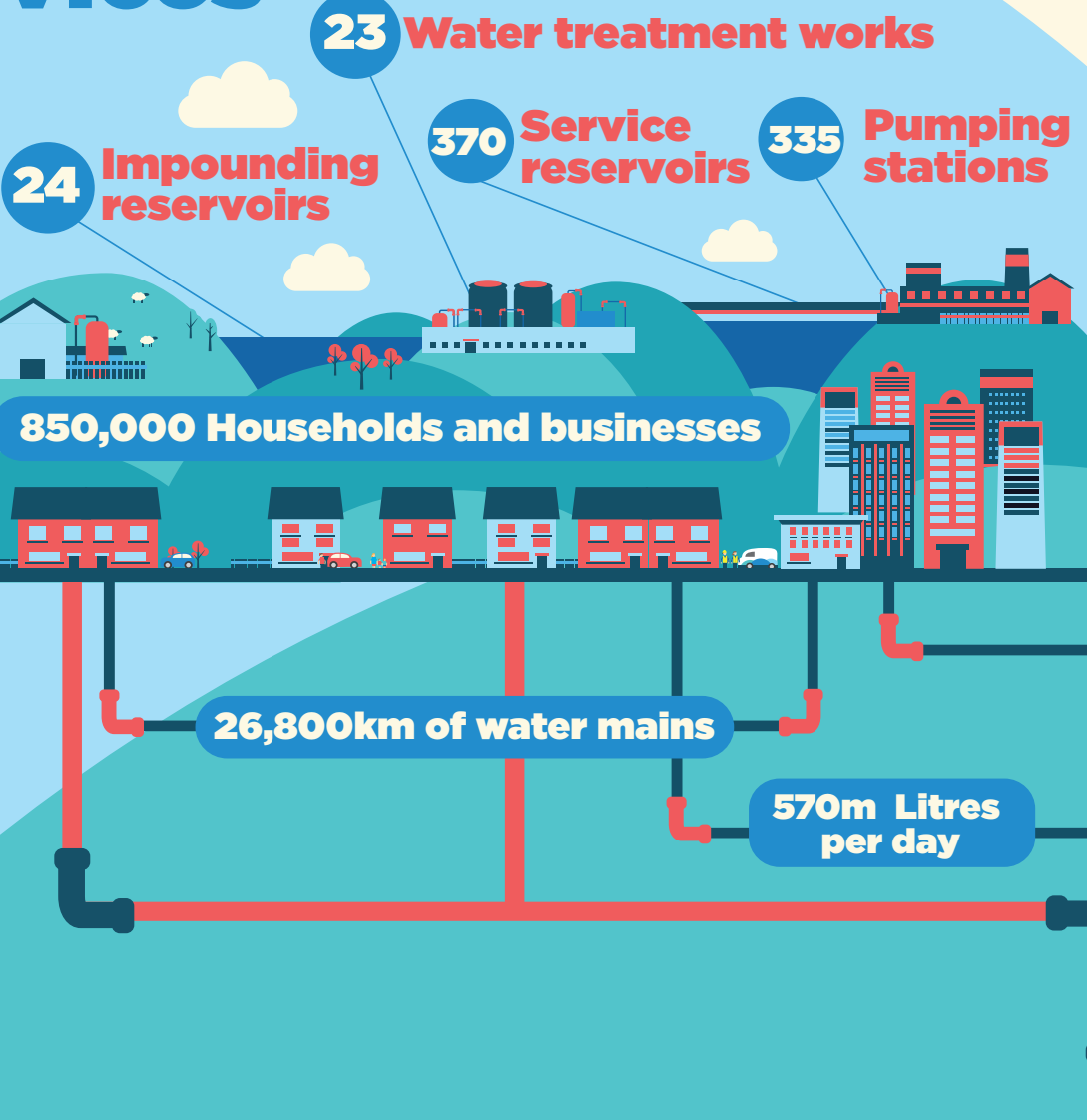
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NI Water: probably the most vital infrastructure.

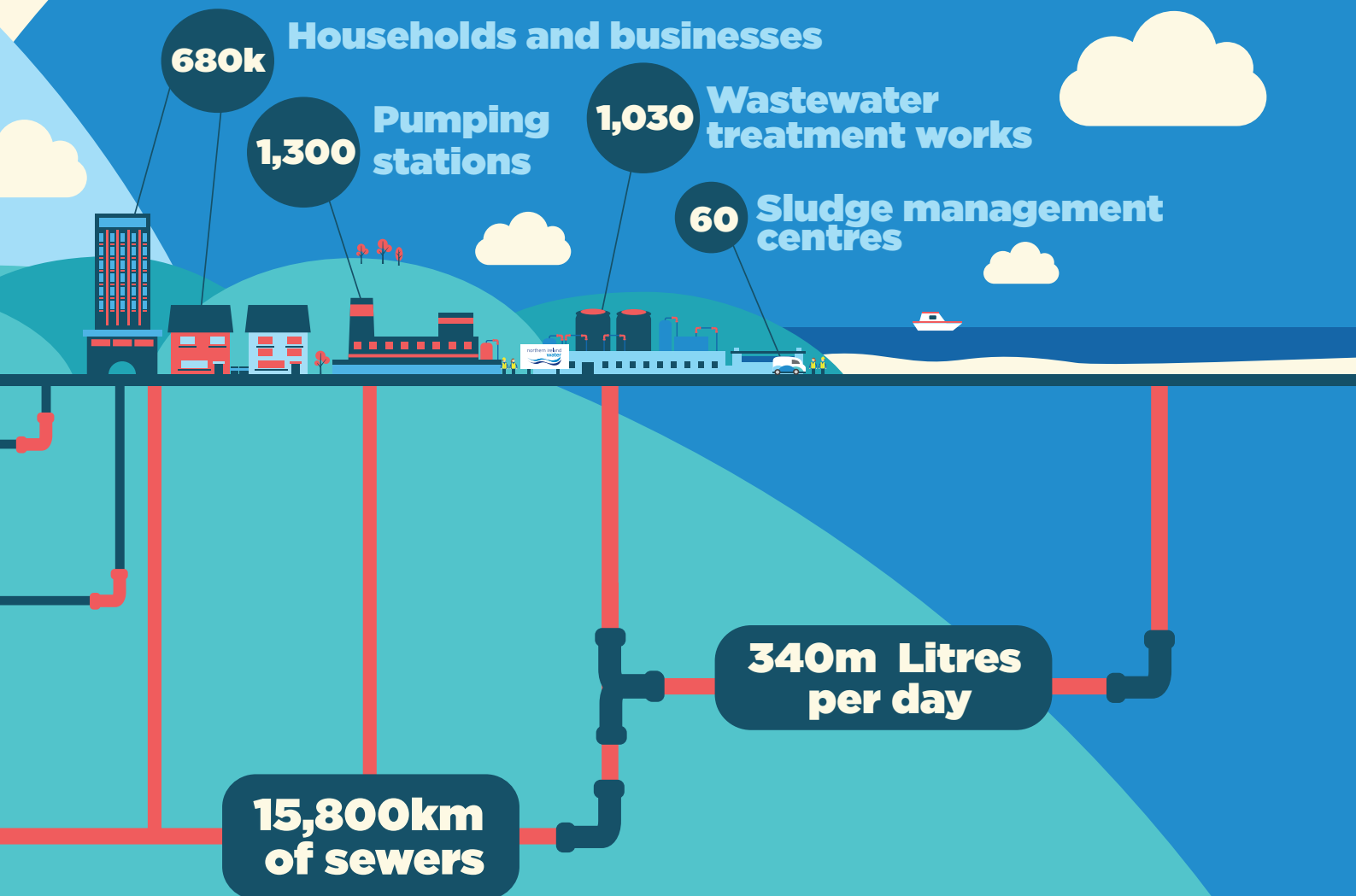
Water is as essential to human activity as air. Every day we process, on average, over 900 million litres of drinking water and wastewater through a vast network of over 42,000 km of water and sewer pipes and over 2,700 sites including treatment works and pumping stations.

Much of what we do takes place underground or out of sight and as a result most people don't think about water and wastewater but economic growth, environment protection, safeguarding people's health; every aspect of life and business in Northern Ireland depends on NI Water's vital infrastructure.

Water services



Waste water services





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www.nilga.org