

To: Council Chief Executives
Cc. Democratic Services Officers

14th August 2023

Dear Chief Executive

Formation of new NILGA Strategic Policy Network

Further to my letter of 31st March 2023, highlighting key dates and information needed by NILGA further to the election, thank you for supplying us with the necessary nominees to the NILGA Full membership and Partnership Panel.

You may have noted in the letter that at that time, NILGA was seeking nominations from councils to one network only (Elected Member Development), with nominations to other policy structures to be sought at a later date.

At the NILGA Executive Committee NILGA on 23rd June, it was agreed that a more streamlined approach would be taken to NILGA policy activity, and to this end it was agreed to form a **Strategic Policy Network**. A Terms of Reference for this Network (enclosed) was agreed by the NILGA Executive on 11th August.

I am therefore writing to seek one (1) elected member from each council (who may or may not be one of your NILGA Full members) to participate in the NILGA Strategic Policy Network. This Network will meet on a bi-monthly basis, and it is anticipated that the first meeting will be either 19th or 26th September 2023, depending on member availability.

Due to the short time frame, I would appreciate your expediting this request. Please feel free to come back to me at any point about the attached ToR or with any other queries about this Network. With thanks for your co-operation and support as always.

Yours faithfully



Karen Smyth
Head of Policy and Governance

NILGA Strategic Policy Network Draft Terms of Reference

Role

The NILGA Strategic Policy Network (SPN) exists to provide scrutiny and leadership, democratic accountability, support and challenge in the development of regional approaches to priority policy issues.

Purpose and Scope

The SPN will provide the NILGA Executive Committee and staff team with:

- a) A strategic focus on key policy issues, through a robust policy framework and policy priorities.
- b) Oversight of the NILGA policy service in accordance with NILGA objectives.
- c) Oversight of the work between local and central government, arms length bodies and partners on delivery of priority policy issues impacting on councils, and on which councils can have an influence.
- d) Contribution to NILGA's sustainability, including by supporting NILGA to embrace new income-generating policy opportunities and projects, within the bounds set out in the Policy Framework.
- e) Assurance that NILGA is delivering against agreed NI local government sector policy priorities.
- f) Promotion of good practice and collaboration.
- g) Supporting elected member development in key policy areas.
- h) Lobbying for improvements and for resources to deliver

Membership and nomination (Total 13) – NB NILGA Officer Bearers/alternates can attend any NILGA meeting.

- A chair and vice chair for the full mandate, nominated by NILGA through the d'Hondt process.
- One elected member nominated from each of the 11 member councils, confirmed each June of the mandate.

Advisors

- At least two council CEOs or Strategic Directors, nominated by Solace NI (supported by Solace NI Policy Officer)
- NILGA CEO and NILGA Head of Impact
- Technical specialists and additional expertise to be accessed as required

Advisors will bring a strategic view to bear across the local government portfolio, and to act as 'generous generalists'.

Northern Ireland Local Government Association

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NILGA Support Officer

- NILGA Head of Policy and Governance

Conflicts of Interest

Members and advisors are required to act in accordance with the requirements of the relevant local government code of conduct. They must declare any personal, private, or commercial interests that might conceivably conflict with the interests of the NILGA SPN and must withdraw from any discussion of topics in which they have such an interest.

Meeting Frequency

Bimonthly.

Deliverables/Reporting

- After each meeting the NILGA Head of Policy and Governance will assist the Chair to prepare a report with key messages, outcomes, decisions taken and next steps, to be delivered to the NILGA Executive Committee before dissemination to the wider NILGA membership.
- The NILGA Head of Policy and Governance will also assist the Network to provide timely responses to relevant government consultations, via the NILGA Executive Committee and in liaison with relevant council officer groups.
- The NILGA support officer will liaise with NILGA Communications staff to ensure the NILGA website is updated appropriately and timely press releases are issued on key pieces of work.

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