



Subject:	Northern Ireland Local Government Association Consultation – Transformation and Driving Practical Change in Local Government
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To present Members with a proposed corporate submission (Appendix A), to NILGA's consultation on 'Transformation and Driving Practical Change in Local Government'.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to: a) consider the proposed draft response which has been considered by Party Group Leaders; and b) approve the submission of the corporate response to NILGA. If approved by the Committee, it will be submitted on a holding basis until being ratified by the Council, to meet the submission deadline of 18th December 2020.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	NILGA wrote to Council on 8 September 2020, requesting corporate views on local government reform to date, as well as what is needed to sustain councils and revitalise communities as part of post pandemic recovery and towards a more locally driven suite of policies and resources for Northern Ireland.
3.2	This consultation exercise had been issued earlier this year but has been updated to recognise the change in context due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Much of the draft response reflects policy positions, previously agreed by CMT in January 2020 and presented to this committee on 21 February 2020, in response to the APSE Local Government Commission 2030.
3.3	However, this draft response has been also updated to recognise the key areas where local government needs stronger legislative and policy powers to drive forward local area recovery from the pandemic.
3.4	<p>NILGA provided a questionnaire containing eight questions each of which are answered within the draft corporate response provided.</p> <p>In summary the headline policy positions proposed in the draft response as to the future role of local government and any future programme for local government reform are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • central government commitment to work in partnership with local councils, by providing the necessary funding and policy backdrop, from which councils can play a leading role in the sustainable recovery of their local areas; • enhanced devolution to local government including regeneration, planning, skills investment and planning, and local transport planning; • enhanced local investment powers, to ensure that councils have the fiscal levers to tackle issues at community and city level; and • the introduction of legislation/measures that strengthen the relationship between central and local government, including a duty to collaborate to provide for responsive and integrated public services delivery at regional, city and community level.

<p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p>Furthermore, in the event of any future transfer of powers to local government. The Council will seek assurances at the outset, that the level of financial resources made available would not only be cost neutral at the point of transfer, but also that councils would be indemnified against any potential future shortfall in funding through an extension of the New Burdens Doctrine (Appendix B). However we make the point that it is vital that the approach to securing the introduction of such a doctrine does not stymie the transfer of certain functions, in particular those of a more strategic nature, such as regeneration. It is important to differentiate between strategic and operational functions in this regard.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix A – Proposed draft response to NILGA consultation questionnaire.</p> <p>Appendix B – Overview of the New Burdens Doctrine</p>