

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Elected Member Development</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Corporate Policy and Resources Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>26 September 2023</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<b>To be discussed In Committee</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	<p><b>Item 3.0</b> £55.00 + VAT per ASDO Member (3.5 fte)</p> <p><b>Item 4.0</b> Leadership Programme £1,215.00 per participant. Planning Leadership Programme £364 per participant. Plus travel &amp; subsistence Plus Planning Study Trip costs (tbc eg: overnight accommodation)</p> <p><b>Item 5.0</b> Conference £165+ VAT per person</p>
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>No</b>
Capital/Revenue	
Code	Conferences/courses 3101-62507 Budget £8,000 Actual Spend to date £4,830
Staffing Costs	<b>Item 3.0</b> Staff time, travel & subsistence

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<b>YES/NO</b>
Legal Opinion Obtained	<b>YES/NO</b>

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## 1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present correspondence/courses regarding Elected Member Development for Members' consideration.

2.0 The following correspondence has been received:

2.1 **In Professional Development (IPD), dated 15 June 2023 (copy email available)**

### **Re: CMI Level 7 Award in Strategic Leadership and Management**

In the previous Council Term, from February 2023 to May 2023, four Councillors undertook the CMI Level 7 Award in Strategic Leadership and Management.

Correspondence has been received to advise that Alderman Knight-McQuillan, Councillor C McShane, Councillor Schenning and former Councillor Mulholland completed the Award and Certificates of Achievement have been issued.

2.2 **Recommendation**

**It is recommended** that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider the correspondence.

3.0 **Alison Allen, Chief Executive, NILGA, dated 18 August 2023 (copy attached)**

### **Re: Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) Branch in NI**

3.1 **Extract**

At the NILGA Elected Member Development Network meeting in January 2023,

the Network requested that a letter be addressed to Council Chief Executives regarding the establishment of an ADSO branch in NI, supported by a report detailing what an NI branch would mean for councils here. I have enclosed this report for your consideration.

The NILGA Elected Member Development Network seeks endorsement from the eleven councils for the establishment of a branch of ADSO in NI. In doing so, Councils are committing to the following:

- Representation on the National ADSO Board
- Establishing an NI ADSO branch
- Democratic Services Officer ADSO Membership and Membership fee

This will require a commitment from the appropriate democratic services team member to participate in a quarterly meeting that will be aligned to the NILGA Elected Member Development Network schedule of meetings.

### 3.2 Association of Democratic Services Officers (ASDO) Membership

Membership rate from 1 November 2023 onwards is £55 per person plus VAT for full members, reduced to £30+VAT for part time members (people working under 35 hours per week) with discounts for Authorities who pay subscriptions on behalf of members on the following basis:

- 2 to 5 members – 10% overall reduction
- 6 to 10 members – 15% overall reduction
- 11 members or more – 20% overall reduction

There are 3.5 FTE Democratic Services' Officers within Council.

### 3.3 Recommendation(s)

**It is recommended** that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider the correspondence from NILGA that the Elected Member Development Network seeks endorsement from the eleven councils for the establishment of a branch of ADSO in NI. In doing so, Council is committing to the following and that consideration is also made of allocating the budgetary provision.

- Representation on the National ADSO Board
- Establishing an NI ADSO branch
- Democratic Services Officer ADSO Membership and Membership fee.

### 4.0 Allison Allen, Chief Executive, NILGA, dated 31 August 2023 (copy attached)

#### Re: NILGA Regional Programme for Elected Member Development

#### 4.1 Summary

Accredited provision is available to elected members related to (i) Leadership and (ii) Planning.

## **Leadership Programme**

- 4.2 NILGA is delivering CPD Standards, 8 Module Accredited Leadership Programme for elected members, which aims to develop the practical skills necessary for a strategic understanding of the context within which councillors work (people, place and systems) and the capabilities they need, using relevant models and concepts to help them improve their strategic leadership approach in a local political environment. The Leadership Programme will commence on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and will run each month up until May 2024. NILGA seeks nominations based on Council's own determinations.

## **Planning Programme**

- 4.3 The NILGA Local Planning Programme is an ILM (recognised award), 5 Module Programme, commencing on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and will convene once every month. NILGA seeks nominations based on Council's own determinations. There is considerable scope for a larger cohort for this programme as NILGA can accommodate up to 40 councillors. Can you please put forward at the earliest possible full council meeting to seek your core nominations (together with any additional potential participants) by the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### **4.3 NILGA Accredited Learning provision 2023/2024 – Indicative Costs**

NILGA Leadership Programme for Councillor Development 2023/24  
Programme Cost £675  
Accreditation Cost £540  
**Indicative Total Cost per participant £1,215**

NILGA Local Planning Leadership Programme for Councillors 2023/24  
Programme Cost £364  
Accreditation Cost £258  
**Indicative Total Cost per participant £622**

### **4.4 Recommendation(s)**

**It is recommended** that Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee consider the correspondence from NILGA regarding nominating to the Leadership Programme, at an indicative cost of £1,215 per participant and Planning Leadership Programme at an indicative cost of £364 per participant (plus Study Trip costs tbc); and that in doing so, consideration is also made of allocating the budgetary provision.

## **5.0 Annual NI Economic Conference 2023**

- Wednesday 6 December 2023, Hilton, Templepatrick
- <https://www.nieconomic.agendani.com/>

**Cost:** Discounted rate for voluntary/community/councils

£165+ VAT = £198

To date, Alderman Callan and Councillor Holmes have expressed an interest to attend the Conference.

Elected Members wishing to attend should contact Democratic Services.

#### 5.1 **Recommendation(s)**

**It is recommended** that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider the Conference listed.

David Jackson  
Chief Executive  
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council  
Cloonavin  
66 Portstewart Road  
Coleraine  
BT52 1EY

18<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Dear David

**Re: Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) Branch in NI**

As you know, NILGA leads on and coordinates the Councillor Development Charter and Charter Plus as well as an all-council Regional Programme of Elected Member Development annually, complementing your Council's specific training, designed to provide the local government sector's elected members with a co-ordinated toolkit of learning, suited to today's responsibilities and challenges. These workstreams have involved a close working relationship between NILGA and council Democratic Services teams. In response to their identified need and agreement from the NILGA Elected Member Development Network, a capacity building programme was co-designed and delivered for Democratic Services teams, as part of the 2021-22 delivery of the Regional Programme. NILGA delivered the Democratic Administration Programme in partnership with ADSO. It was very well received by the thirty-three officers that participated. Following this and further engagement with ADSO at the NILGA Elected Member Development Network, an interest in the establishment of a branch of ADSO in NI emerged.

The Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) is the professional body which represents and supports all staff who work or have worked within the Democratic Services sector in Principal Local Authorities, Joint/Combined Authorities, Fire & Rescue Authorities and other similar governance organisations.

At the NILGA Elected Member Development Network meeting in January 2023, the Network requested that a letter be addressed to Council Chief Executives regarding the

establishment of an ADSO branch in NI, supported by a report detailing what an NI branch would mean for councils here. I have enclosed this report for your consideration.

The NILGA Elected Member Development Network seeks endorsement from the eleven councils for the establishment of a branch of ADSO in NI. In doing so, Councils are committing to the following:

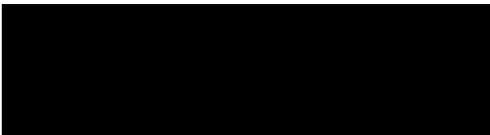
- Representation on the National ADSO Board
- Establishing an NI ADSO branch
- Democratic Services Officer ADSO Membership and Membership fee

This will require a commitment from the appropriate democratic services team member to participate in a quarterly meeting that will be aligned to the NILGA Elected Member Development Network schedule of meetings.

I have attached the report to assist in your consideration of establishment and participation, based upon previous delivery.

Thanking you in anticipation of your continued positive approach and participation. Please feel free to contact my colleague Fiona Douglas ([f.douglas@nilga.org](mailto:f.douglas@nilga.org)) or myself if you or a senior colleague wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,



**Alison Allen**  
**Chief Executive**

**CC. Samantha Rea**



Association of  
**Democratic Services  
Officers**

## **An Introduction to ADSO**

The Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) is the professional body which represents and supports all staff who work or have worked within the Democratic Services sector in Principal Local Authorities, Joint/Combined Authorities, Fire & Rescue Authorities and other similar governance organisations. Please see [www.adso.co.uk](http://www.adso.co.uk) for further details.

We currently have over 1,400 members across over 300 councils and other organisations in England and Wales.

Our aims are:

- To promote the professional status of democratic services
- To foster best practice in democratic services
- To promote the development of our members by the provision of qualifications and training
- To represent the democratic services profession through active engagement with others
- To act as a body of influence on all matters relating to democratic services
- To provide opportunities for the exchange of views and experiences amongst members of the Association and with others

### **ADSO Governance**

ADSO has a national board led by 6 Directors (elected by the membership) plus two non-executive Directors appointed by the Board. We are divided up into 11 regions with regional coordinators who also sit on the Board. The proposal is that Northern Ireland will become the 12<sup>th</sup> region with representation on the Board.

### **Benefits of ADSO in Northern Ireland**

ADSO would be the professional voice for Democratic Services Officers in Northern Ireland. We will provide a series of services and networking opportunities which are set out below. We are very conscious of the different structures and legislation in Northern Ireland, and we would adjust our services accordingly, including our training and qualifications.

## Training

Our National Training Programme contains the following courses and is delivered virtually (via zoom) to Democratic Services Officers across different authorities who pay a fee per person per course. All courses are 2 x 3 hours except 'Becoming a DSO' which is 1 x 3 hours. Click on the links for summary details of each course:

- **Overview and Scrutiny**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Overview-and-Scrutiny/80288>
- **Becoming a DSO – an introduction**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Becoming-a-DSO—An-Introduction/80289>
- **Council and its governance arrangements**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Council-and-Its-Governance/80290>
- **Ethics & Standards**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Ethics-Standards/80322>
- **Just a Minute**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/adso/ADSO---Just-a-Minute-/80317>
- **Structures and Functions of Local Government**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Structures-and-Functions/80347>
- **Working in a Political Environment**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Working-in-a-Political-Environment/80326>
- **Law and Practice of Local Government**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Law-and-Practice-of-Local-Government/80327>
- **Meetings Procedures**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Meetings-Procedures/80315>
- **Introduction to Company Secretarial Practice**  
<https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/ADSO/ADSO—Introduction-to-Company-Secretarial-Practice/80295>

The cost for each course is currently £110 per person plus VAT, with the exception of "Becoming a DSO – an introduction" which costs £55 per person plus VAT. These are the rates for ADSO members. Non-members pay £160pp plus VAT for the 2 x 3 hour courses.

In addition, we can provide bespoke training for individual councils, covering the above issues plus other topics. We can offer any of the courses listed above for £895 plus VAT. This covers delivery of a course for up to 15 people (more subject to negotiation). New tailor-made courses and costs are by negotiation. We are also happy to deliver the sessions in person, but additional travel and subsistence costs will apply in addition to the fee quoted above.

## **Qualifications**

We offer two qualifications:

- **ADSO Certificate in Democratic Services**

The Certificate is aimed at those who already work in the Democratic Services area, including all democratic functions such as meetings support, scrutiny, members support and civic support. They may be newly appointed (with a minimum of 6 months in the job) or want to get some recognition for their skills and knowledge learned 'on the job'.

- **ADSO Diploma in Local Democracy**

There are no formal entry requirements for undertaking the Diploma, but a learner would ideally possess an in-depth knowledge of the main democratic functions and have a number of years' experience of working in the sector.

The cost of the Certificate for ADSO members is £1200 and for non-members £1530 (both plus VAT. For the higher-level Diploma, it is £1550 for ADSO members and £1880 for non-members (again plus VAT).

Further information can be found at [www.adso.co.uk](http://www.adso.co.uk) (click on 'Training').

## **On-Line Forum**

We recommend this as an essential resource for all Democratic Services Officers. ADSO members can access it via the ADSO website ([www.adso.co.uk](http://www.adso.co.uk)). It is a very useful resource for exchanging information, seeking answers to questions, and solving problems.

## **Democracy Matters Newsletter**

All ADSO members receive 'Democracy Matters' on a weekly basis. It is recommended reading. It keeps them up to date with all that is happening in the ADSO and governance world, including news, forthcoming training courses and webinars.

## **Webinars**

ADSO runs a series of on-line webinars throughout the year. These comprise presentations, followed by a question-and-answer session. They are free to ADSO members and last about an hour.

## **Annual Conference**

We have recommenced our in-person annual conference and had a highly successful event in November 2022, attended by over 200 people. The 2023 conference is being held on 23 and 24 November in Oxford. Bookings have recently closed as we are oversubscribed.

## **Networking**

In addition to the networking opportunities above (the members on-line forum, regional meetings, and annual conference) we also encourage our members to participate in partnership initiatives with international partners. For example, we will be sponsoring a number of our members to attend a symposium in Amsterdam in September to network with governance officers from countries such as the USA, Canada, The Netherlands, Belgium, and Scotland. This opportunity will be open to Liverpool Council democratic services officers who are members of ADSO.

## **ADSO Membership**

Our current membership rate from 1 November 2023 onwards is £55 per person plus VAT for full members, reduced to £30+VAT for part time members (people working under 35 hours per week) with discounts for Authorities who pay subscriptions on behalf of members on the following basis:

- 2 to 5 members – 10% overall reduction
- 6 to 10 members – 15% overall reduction
- 11 members or more – 20% overall reduction

We also offer a reduced fee for retired ADSO members of £10 + VAT.

If members join between July and October 2023, we offer an extended membership until October 2024. That is up to 15 months membership for the price of 12.

For further information, please contact:

John Austin – ADSO Chair  
07793 013616  
[john.austin@adso.co.uk](mailto:john.austin@adso.co.uk)

7 August 2023

David Jackson  
Chief Executive  
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council  
Cloonavin  
66 Portstewart Road  
Coleraine  
BT52 1EY

31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

Dear David

**Re: NILGA Regional Programme for Elected Member Development 2023-24**

As you know, NILGA coordinates an all-council Regional Programme of Elected Member Development annually, complementing your Council's specific training, designed to provide the local government sector's elected members with a co-ordinated toolkit of learning, suited to today's responsibilities and challenges. This builds on the NILGA delivered - nationally accredited Councillor Development Charter and Charter Plus initiatives, has been co-designed by councils' elected member development groups, councils' member services and human resource officials, through the NILGA Elected Member Development Network.

As part of this, accredited provision is available to elected members related to (i) Leadership and (ii) Planning.

- (i)** NILGA is delivering CPD Standards, **8 Module Accredited Leadership Programme** for elected members, which aims to develop the practical skills necessary for a strategic understanding of the context within which councillors work (people, place and systems) and the capabilities they need, using relevant models and concepts to help them improve their strategic leadership approach in a local political environment. The Leadership Programme will commence on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and will run each month up until May 2024. NILGA seeks nominations based on your own determinations, which we ask you seek at the earliest possible full council meeting.

Module	Title	Time	Date	Venue
<b>Module 1</b>	Programme Induction  The Roles of Councillors	1-4pm	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	In-person, venue tbc
<b>Module 2</b>	Leadership of Your Local Area	tba	tba November 2023	Online / Digital
<b>Module 3</b>	Leadership of Your Local Community	tba	tba December 2023	Online / Digital
<b>Module 4</b>	Leadership with Partners – We are all in this together?	tba	tba January 2024	Online / Digital
<b>Module 5</b>	Leadership of Place	tba	tba February 2024	Online / Digital
<b>Module 6</b>	Leading the Improvement of Outcomes	tba	tba March 2024	Online / Digital
<b>Module 7</b>	Leading the Improvement of Efficiency and Service Delivery	tba	tba April 2024	Online / Digital
<b>Module 8</b>	Developing your Future Leadership Role	tba	tba May 2024	In-person, Venue tbc

(ii) **The NILGA Local Planning Programme is an ILM (recognised award)**, 5 Module Programme, commencing on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and will convene once every month. NILGA seeks nominations based on your own determinations, which we ask you seek at the earliest possible full council meeting. There is considerable scope for a larger cohort for this programme as we can accommodate up to 40 councillors. Can you please put forward at the earliest possible full council meeting to seek your core nominations (together with any additional potential participants) by the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Module	Title	Time	Date	Venue
<b>Module 1</b>	Understanding Plan Making and the Role of Councillors  Understanding the LDP Process from Draft Stage to Adoption.	2-4.30pm	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	In-person, venue tbc
<b>Module 2</b>	How Local Development	2-4.30pm	15th December	Online

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association**

Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB

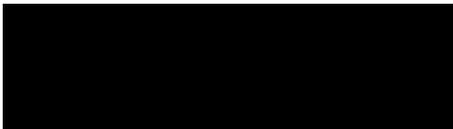
Tel: 028 9079 8972 email: [office@nilga.org](mailto:office@nilga.org) web: [www.nilga.org](http://www.nilga.org) twitter: @NI\_LGA

	Planning is Linked to Community Planning and Regeneration Activities		2023	/ Digital
<b>Module 3</b>	Understanding Development Management: The Planning Process and the Role of Councillors, Planning	2-4.30pm	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Online /Digital
<b>Module 4</b>	Understanding the Statutory Appeal System and Best Practice	2-4.30pm	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2024	In – person venue tba
<b>Module 5</b>	Maladministration charges to the Ombudsman and the Judicial Review of Planning.	2-4.30pm	29 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Online / Digital
	Study Trip to Republic of Ireland		tba April 2024	tba

Please note in both cases, there are costs per participant associated with this type of provision and I have included an indicative costs model to assist in your consideration of participation, based upon previous delivery.

Thanking you in anticipation of your continued positive approach and nominations for participation on the accredited Provision. Please feel free to contact my colleague Fiona Douglas ([f.douglas@nilga.org](mailto:f.douglas@nilga.org)) or myself if you or a senior colleague wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,



**Alison Allen**  
Chief Executive

**CC. Pauline Donaghy**

**NILGA Accredited Learning Provision 2023-24 - Indicative Costs**

<b>NILGA Leadership Programme for Councillor Development 2023-24</b>	
	<b>20 Participants (Per Participant Cost)</b>
<b>Programme Cost</b>	£675
<b>Accreditation Cost</b>	£540
<b>Total Cost</b>	£1215

<b>NILGA Local Planning Leadership Programme for Councillors 2023-24</b>	
	<b>30 Participants (Per Participant Cost)</b>
<b>Programme Cost</b>	£364
<b>Accreditation Cost</b>	£258
<b>Total Cost</b>	£622

*Please note that these are total costs required per participant from each Council.*

## **NILGA Leadership Development Programme for Councillors 2023-24**

### **What is this programme about?**

The NILGA Leadership and Development Programme provides a unique training and development experience for councillors in Northern Ireland to help them address the challenges of their role.

The programme is based on a tested and highly accessible model, which helps councillors to improve their understanding of:

- *Context*: how to adapt their leadership styles and practices to the context and challenges of their own place, people and systems.
- *Theory*: what knowledge, skills and capabilities they need to be effective, based on rigorous conceptual and theoretical frameworks.
- *Practice*: how to increase their personal resilience and improve their practical response to challenges.

The programme therefore enhances councillors' strategic leadership and decision-making skills, making more effective their Council role, community champion activities and 'personal brand'.

### **How will this programme benefit me?**

The programme will help you to develop the practical skills necessary to be a more effective councillor, to highlight what roles you currently play and should look to play in the future, and to overcome the major challenges and barriers you face in playing these roles.

You will have the chance to catch up with the latest thinking on local government leadership and to develop new approaches to your work as a councillor.

The Programme is deliberately ambitious – it aims to enable you to take a strategic approach to identifying, balancing and addressing the needs in your local area and making more effective use of the assets of local residents, community groups, local business, your political party (if you belong to one) and the Council.

The programme is also designed to help you to deal successfully with the operational problems faced by your constituents. Case studies and discussions with visiting speakers who have directly relevant experience of the issues will introduce new approaches, so that you are assisted to think and act differently and have more impact in tackling the problems you face.

Finally, the programme is CPD-accredited, so upon completion you will accumulate CPD credits to demonstrate your achievement.

## Programme of workshops

Date	Time	Venue	Module
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	1 – 4pm	In - person tba	<b>Module 1:</b> Programme Induction The Role of the Councillor
tba, November 2023	tba	Online / Digital	<b>Module 2:</b> Leadership of Your Area
tba, December 2023	tba	Online / Digital	<b>Module 3:</b> Leadership of Your Community
tba, January 2024	tba	Online / Digital	<b>Module 4:</b> Leadership with Partners – We’re All in This Together
tba, February 2024	tba	Online / Digital	<b>Module 5:</b> Leadership of Place
tba, March 2024	tba	Online / Digital	<b>Module 6:</b> Leading the Improvement of Outcomes
tba, April 2024	tba	Online / Digital	<b>Module 7:</b> Leading the Improvement of Efficiency and Service Delivery
tba, May 2024	tba	In - person tba	<b>Module 8:</b> Developing Your Future Leadership Role

### What commitment will the programme entail from me?

You will be expected to attend eight 3-hour workshops over 8 months, beginning in October 2023. About one hour’s preparation is required for each workshop (reading a short article or blog and preparing the answer to some questions relevant to the session). You will then gain CPD credits for your attendance. In addition, you will get 12 extra CPD credits if you make a short presentation in one of the final workshops, focusing on how you are improving your leadership in line with the lessons you have learnt from the programme.

### What other participants have gained

NILGA believes this programme brings major benefits for all participants. And previous participants agree here are some comments from councillors who participated in previous programmes:

“... More recently I have had the opportunity to participate in and complete the NILGA Leadership Programme 2021-22 and I would recommend it to all new councillors. It provides the opportunity to work with some excellent facilitators but also to hear and share with other councillors of varying levels of experience and with a wide range of backgrounds and interests.

It allowed me the time and space to think about how and what my council was doing and provided me with the tools to raise issues with officers and also to suggest solutions. It was clear also that councils don’t work in a vacuum and that there is a lot to be gained from building relationships and partnerships with fellow councillors, officers, and other statutory agencies.

I would highly recommend this course to all councillors, as it has been developed from a sound academic and practical background and contains information and insights which I have found invaluable over the past few years.”

“The programme has been brilliant from start to finish, I have learnt a lot from it and from that learning I can actually make better decisions and get more involved in my role as a Councillor as I no longer shy away from the big decisions.”

“The use of data sources and the approach of identifying key skills in people where I do not have the strength in such. Also, the continual developing and learning in myself has been a great asset in both council and my professional role.”

“I found the course informative, and it helped me to understand my role as a Councillor and leader in my community. It was also really good to hear experiences and tips from Councillors in other areas.”

“... pushed me to make me even more self-aware ..., especially of my leadership style and how best to utilise this in different groups and situations. Particularly the power of influence and not control!”

“As a newly elected councillor I am still very much learning in the role. Content in the Programme helped me gain a better understanding of process and how to achieve outcomes.”



## **NILGA Local Planning Leadership Programme for Councillors 2023-24**

### **What is this programme about?**

The NILGA Local Planning Leadership Programme provides a unique training and development experience for councillors in Northern Ireland involved in council planning committees to help them address the challenges of their role.

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

Councillors that sit on planning committees will be tasked with assessing the different benefits and impacts of planning applications, weighing up these considerations against regional policy and the policies published in your published local development plan (LDP). It is vital you therefore have a sound understanding of the planning system. The Programme is based on a tested and highly accessible model, which helps councillors in this regard.

The delivery of this programme will be interactive and interesting for Councillors allowing them to learn from case studies, ask questions regularly and to undertake role play in workshops. Delivery will include:

- *Short presentations using PowerPoint.*
- *Discussions*
- *Case studies and benchmarking practice in other jurisdictions.*
- *Workshops with role play.*
- *Question/answer sessions.*
- *Mock appeal.*
- *Handouts in paper form.*
- *Summary notes of discussions at each session and suggestions for further training.*
- *Optional study trip.*

The programme therefore enhances councillors’ strategic leadership and decision-making skills, making them more effective decision makers in their planning committee role, place shaping activities and overall competence in local development planning.

## How will this programme benefit me?

The programme will improve your understanding of the plan making system and role in the process as civic leaders. It will enable you to participate effectively and take the lead in making robust and defensible decisions about the future of your council area.

You will have the chance to increase your understanding about what Council's priorities for statutory plan making could and should be. Participation will help in your role to ensure Council effectively manages the planning process and does not breach any statutory requirements or fail to get the plan through to adoption in a timely manner.

The programme will make the linkages, both statutory and practical, between community planning and the statutory local development planning being carried out by Councils and your strategic leadership role as a councillor. Further linkages with planning activities carried out by the Department for infrastructure and by Department for Communities at regional and local level will also be explained. As a result, councillors and their councils will be better enabled to demonstrate 'joined up' good governance and the delivery of planning and related activities in a holistic way.

Regarding development management, the programme will improve your understanding of the development management system, enhancing your strategic leadership decision-making capacity for the delivery of Council's planning objectives as set out in its policies, its emerging Local Development Plan and in regional guidance. Councillors will also have improved understanding of the enforcement process and when enforcement action is desirable.

The programme is also designed to help you reduce Council's vulnerability on appeal in the interests of minimising the possibility of award of costs at appeal, as well as Council's vulnerability in relation to maladministration of their planning powers.

The programme is deliberately ambitious in its aim to help to safeguard Council's reputation as responsible decision maker across a range of interrelated areas of local government.

The impact and success of the training will be monitored at an individual level through returned course evaluation forms and improved understanding demonstrated in workshops.

Finally, Councillors who successfully complete the entire course to a satisfactory standard will be credited with an Institution of Leadership and Management (ILM) Endorsed Award.

## Programme of workshops

Date	Time	Venue	Module
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	2 – 4.30pm	In – Person tbc	<b>Module 1:</b> Understanding Plan Making and Role of Councillors Understanding the LDP process from draft stage to adoption.

15 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	2-4.30pm	Online /Digital	<b>Module 2:</b> How the Local Development Plan is Linked to Community Planning and Regeneration Activities
26 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	2-4.30pm	Online / Digital	<b>Module 3:</b> Understanding Development Management: The Planning Process and the Role of the Councillors Understanding Planning Conditions and Planning Agreements and the Role of the Planning Committee The Statutory Enforcement Process and the Role of the Planning committee
23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2024	2-4.30pm	Online / Digital	<b>Module 4:</b> Understanding the Statutory Appeal System
29 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	2-4.30pm	Online / Digital	<b>Module 5:</b> Maladministration charges to the Ombudsman and the Judicial Review of Planning
tba April 2024	Study Trip to the Republic of Ireland		<b>Study Trip</b>

### What commitment will the programme entail from me?

You will be expected to attend five, two-hour and a half hour workshops over 5 months, beginning in November 2023. The programme also includes a study trip to the Republic of Ireland, which is optional.

At each workshop you will receive a workbook assessment sheet with some case studies and questions related to the workshop content. To achieve the ILM accreditation, you will be required to submit at least three of these workbook assessment sheets, completed to the required standard, by a date agreed with the course co-ordinator at the final workshop.

### What other participants have gained?

NILGA believes this programme brings major benefits for all participants. And previous participants agree, here is a testimonial from a councillor who participated in previous programmes:

*‘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.'*

*Cllr Robert Irvine*

*(Fermanagh and Omagh District Council)*

*NILGA amongst many other things, provides training support for councillors. I attended the ILM accredited NILGA Local Planning and Leadership Programme, which was excellent. Having previously had some knowledge of planning, this programme certainly enhanced and widened my knowledge of the subject. One of the modules was with a Planning Commissioner from the Planning Appeals Commission. I found this module to be extremely informative and overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the entire course and can wholeheartedly recommend the course to any councillor, especially those elected for the first time, if they are on the planning committee.*

*Cllr Thomas Gordon*

*(Mid and East Antrim Council)*

### **For more information**

The NILGA Local Planning Leadership Programme 2023-24, detailed prospectus is available on the NILGA Website. All interested parties can contact Fiona Douglas ([f.douglas@nilga.org](mailto:f.douglas@nilga.org)) to discuss further.