

Causeway Coast & Glens

Shadow Council

To: Shadow Council

Date: 18th December 2014

Correspondence report

FOR INFORMATION

1. **NORTHERN IRELAND AUDIT OFFICE – CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS STATUTORY TRANSITION COMMITTEE**

1.1 **Annual Audit Letter 2013-14**

Under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2006 the Chief Local Government Auditor is required to issue an Annual Audit Letter and to ensure that all Members receive a copy. The Letter is attached for Members' information and will also be published on the Council's website.

1.2 **Report to those charged with Governance 2013-14**

The audit of Statutory Transition Committee's statement of accounts for 2013-14 has been completed and is attached for Members' information.

2. **PARTNERSHIP PANEL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

Council views were sought by Department of the Environment on which representative bodies/associations should be represented on the Partnership Panel. Having considered the views of Councils the Minister has written to confirm that he has invited NILGA's Office Bearers to the first meeting of the Panel on 2nd December 2014.

3. **LOCAL ACTION GROUP**

- **Report on LAG Formation**

The latest editions of the Local Action Groups facilitator newsletters are attached. The publication is specifically targeted at those involved in the process of LAG formation. An update on the formation process is also attached.

- **Local Action Group Update**

The latest public facing newsletters have also been attached.

4. **NILGA "CREATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY" EVENTS**

14th January 2015 10.00am – 1.00pm – La Mon Hotel & Country Club, Castlereagh

15th January 2015 10.00am – 1.00pm – Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Craigavon

Hosted by NILGA and NAC with support from the Local Government Training Group these sessions give examples of what councils have done to innovatively reduce costs and deliver better services. The event is free and open to all Elected Members and Officers. If you are interested in attending please contact Member Services (Pauline or Sinéad).

Issued by the Local Government Auditor



For the period ended 31
March 2014

To the Members of
Causeway Coast and Glens
Statutory Transition
Committee

Louise Mason
Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

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1. Introduction

I have been designated the Local Government Auditor for the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee by the Department of the Environment with the consent of the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland.

2. Financial Statements

Summary of Audit Findings

The Causeway Coast and Glens Transition Committee must prepare its accounts in the form directed by the Department of the Environment. The accounts must give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure for the financial period and the financial position as at the end of the financial period.

On the 31 October 2014 for the period ended 31 March 2014 I gave the following unqualified opinion on the financial statements;

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements, of the financial position of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee as at 31 March 2014 and its income and expenditure for the period then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 and the Department of the Environment directions issued there under.

At the end of the audit my staff issued a Report to those Charged with Governance on the results of the audit. There were no significant, important or best practice findings arising from our audit.

Financial Performance

The Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure of the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee shows that during the period ended 31 March 2014 the Statutory Transition Committee incurred expenditure of £102,279 matched by income of £102,279.

3. Governance

Governance Statement

The Chief Financial Officer has responsibility for maintaining a system of sound internal controls and risk management processes to support the Statutory Transition Committee in the achievement of its objectives, and for reviewing their effectiveness. Overall control of the governance framework and system of internal controls is the responsibility of the Statutory Transition Committee.

I am required to report if the Governance Statement:

- does not comply with proper practices specified by the Department of the Environment; or
- is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit.

I have no inconsistencies to report as a result of my review of the Governance Statement. The Statutory Transition Committee noted no significant governance issues in its Governance Statement.

Other matters of interest

In accordance with the Local Government (Statutory Transition Committees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013, the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee ceased to exist on 19 June 2014.

4. Closing Remarks

The letter is addressed to the Members of the Statutory Transition Committee and prepared for the sole use of the audited body. No responsibility is taken by auditors to any member or officer in their individual capacity, or to any third party. The factual accuracy of this Audit Letter has been agreed with the Chief Financial Officer of the Statutory Transition Committee.

Louise Mason

Local Government Auditor

2 December 2014



Northern Ireland Audit Office

Our purpose ...

Promoting better use of public money, through independent professional scrutiny, underpinned by our commitment to:

- Integrity
- Equality
- Openness
- Innovation

To make a difference for the people of Northern Ireland.

The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 provides that the Department of the Environment may, with the consent of the Comptroller and Auditor General, designate persons who are members of the Northern Ireland Audit Office as Local Government Auditors. Louise Mason, Assistant Auditor General, is the designated Local Government Auditor for all local government bodies in Northern Ireland.

For further information please contact:

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CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS STATUTORY TRANSITION COMMITTEE

**AUDIT OF 2013-14
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

**REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH
GOVERNANCE**

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This report summarises the key matters arising from our audit of the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee 2013-14 financial statements for the benefit of those charged with governance¹.
2. The examination of the 2013-14 financial statements was undertaken in accordance with auditing standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board (APB), taking into account Practice Note 10 (Revised); Audit of Financial Statements in Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom and the Code of Audit Practice.
3. Our prior consent should be sought before any distribution of this Report (including web publication) either in full or in part is made. The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) does not accept responsibility to any third party for losses arising from reliance being placed on this report.
4. In accordance with regulation 6 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, the audited body shall as soon as reasonably possible after the conclusion of an audit, and in any event before 31 October immediately following the end of the financial year, publish its financial statements including the audit report.
5. In addition, after the conclusion of the audit the Council shall then place an advertisement stating, in line with regulation 12 Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, that the audit has been concluded and that the financial statements are publically available. A copy of the paper(s) incorporating this advertisement should be sent to our office within a week of the advertisement being made.

Actions for those charged with governance

6. Those charged with governance are invited to review the findings set out in this report, including the letter of representation and audit report included in Annex A and Annex B respectively.

Status of audit

7. Our audit is complete.

Overall conclusion and opinion

8. The Local Government Auditor provided her audit opinion in the format set out in Annex B – Audit Report. The audit report included an opinion as to the truth and fairness of the financial statements and that certain information given in the Explanatory Foreword is consistent with the financial statements.
9. We recommended to the Local Government Auditor that she certifies the 2013-14 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification.

Audit judgements

10. No significant audit judgements were made in reaching our audit opinion.

Audit Risks

11. We did not identify any significant risks during the course of the audit.

Audit findings

12. In Section 2 we outline the quality, effectiveness and transparency of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee's financial reporting and its accounting policy selection, and our audit findings including any issues identified relating to regularity and the internal control environment.

¹ In accordance with ISA 260, those charged with governance are those individuals accountable for ensuring that the entity achieves its objectives, with regard to reliability of financial reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations, compliance with applicable laws, and reporting to interested parties.

Executive Summary

13. No issues were identified on the quality, effectiveness and transparency of financial reporting and accounting.
14. The accounting policies were considered appropriate.
15. There were no significant issues identified regarding regularity.
16. We identified no significant internal control weaknesses².
17. Further issues of interest are set out in the Other Matters of Governance Interest section.

Identified misstatements

18. There were no misstatements identified during the course of the audit.
19. We made a number of suggestions to improve narrative disclosures and to ensure completeness of the disclosures required under the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

² In accordance with ISA 265, it is the auditor's responsibility to communicate appropriately to those charged with governance and management, deficiencies in internal control identified in an audit of financial statements that, in the auditor's professional judgement, are of sufficient importance to merit their respective attentions.

Section 1

Audit Findings

Financial Reporting and Accounting Policies

- 1.1 The Financial Statements are required to comply with the Accounts Direction issued by the Department of the Environment.
- 1.2 In this section we draw to your attention our review of qualitative aspects of the accounting practices and financial reporting. This includes any significant changes or issues in respect of the accounting policies; estimates; judgements and the adequacy of disclosures affected by unusual or non-recurring transactions recognised during the period. We also review the overall balance and clarity of information contained in the Explanatory Foreword.
- 1.3 We are content with the quality, effectiveness and transparency of financial reporting and accounting. We are content with the appropriateness of the accounting policies judged against the objectives of relevance, reliability, comparability and understandability.
- 1.4 We are content with the appropriateness of accounting estimates and judgements made to support the disclosures in the financial statements.

Review of information in the Explanatory Foreword

- 1.5 We review information in the Explanatory Foreword only to the extent that we confirm it is consistent with the financial statements and our understanding of the business. Except as noted in the audit opinion, the Explanatory Foreword is not subject to our audit opinion.
- 1.6 The Explanatory Foreword was considered to be consistent with our understanding of the business, and was in line with the other information provided in the financial statements.

Internal Control

- 1.7 We have reviewed the Governance Statement and in our opinion, it fairly reflects our understanding of the state of internal control systems within the entity during the year.

Observations & Recommendations

- 1.8 This section outlines the findings arising from our audit, as well as management's response and target date for implementation to these recommendations.

There were no significant, important or best practice findings arising from our audit.

- 1.9 Our procedures included a review of the internal controls and accounting systems and procedures only to the extent considered necessary for the effective performance of the audit. Audit findings and observations therefore should not be regarded as representing a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses which exist, or all improvements which could be made to the systems and procedures operated.

Section 2

Other Matters of Governance Interest

- 2.1 International Standard on Auditing 260 requires us to communicate with those charged with governance any other audit matters of governance interest. These include matters which have come to our attention which may present future risks, enhance overall governance or where those charged with governance might wish to seek assurance on controls and processes.

Fraud

- 2.2 We are required by Auditing Standards to report to you if we identify a fraud or obtain information that indicates that a fraud may exist. We found no such instances during our testing.
- 2.3 In addition, we are not aware of material weaknesses in the design or implementation of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
- 2.4 In the course of our audit we have not identified any suspected or non-compliance with the laws and regulations.

Going concern

- 2.5 The Statutory Transition Committee ceased to exist on 19 June 2014 following election of the new shadow Council.

Management of personal data

- 2.6 The Council is required to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 in the handling and storage of personal data and those charged with governance should ensure they have made sufficient enquiries of management to form a view on whether there were any significant specific data incidents which should be disclosed in the Governance Statement. We are unaware of any data handling incidents during the year. Confirmation of this is sought within the letter of representation (Annex A).

Statement on personal data

- 2.7 During the course of our audit we have access to personal data to support our audit testing. We have established processes to hold this data securely within encrypted files and to destroy it where relevant at the conclusion of our audit. We can confirm that we have discharged those responsibilities communicated to you in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Disagreements with management

- 2.8 There are no audit disagreements with management about matters that could be significant to the financial statements to report.

Co-operation with other auditors

Internal Audit

- 2.9 Although we have not placed specific reliance on the work of Internal Audit, we liaised with them and used their work to inform our audit approach.

Deficiencies in internal control

- 2.10 There were no significant deficiencies identified in internal control.

Independence, integrity & objectivity of auditors

- 2.11 The NIAO's policy to ensure independence, integrity and objectivity of our auditors was set out in our Audit Strategy. Overall, the threat to the audit arising from issues affecting our independence, integrity and objectivity is low, and the safeguards in place ensure that the likelihood of any impact is low.
- 2.12 We have complied with APB Ethical Standards and, in our professional judgement, we are independent and our objectivity is not compromised. There are no relationships between NIAO and the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee that we consider to bear on our objectivity and independence.

Section 2

Other Matters of Governance Interest

Reliance on other experts

2.13 We have not relied on other experts for this audit.

Other matters of interest

2.14 We are not aware of other issues to be raised to be raised in this Report.

Complaints procedure

2.15 NIAO seeks to ensure that, when carrying out its audit work, it complies with the principles developed by the Public Audit Forum in its paper “What Public Sector Bodies can expect from their Auditors”.

NIAO also wishes to gauge public sector bodies’ perceptions of its audit processes in order to promote continuous improvement. In particular, it undertakes to act quickly on any complaint and ensure that the underlying causes of problems are addressed to prevent them recurring. In the first instance, complaints can be addressed to the member of the Directorate responsible for the audit within which the concern has been raised.

Failing resolution of the problem to the satisfaction of the complainant, the Chief Executive of the audited body can then write directly to the Comptroller and Auditor General. He will ensure that a further review of the case will be undertaken.

[Client Letterhead]

The Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
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CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLEN STATUTORY TRANSITION COMMITTEE FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

I acknowledge as Chief Financial Officer of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee my responsibility for preparing accounts that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs, income and expenditure and cash flows of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee for the period ended 31 March 2014.

In preparing the accounts, I was required to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Department of the Environment (DOE), including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply appropriate accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis; and
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed and disclosed and explain any material departures in the accounts.

I confirm that for the financial period ended 31 March 2014:

- having considered and enquired as to the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee's compliance with law and regulations, I am not aware of any actual or potential non-compliance that could have a material effect on the ability of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee to conduct its business or on the results and financial position disclosed in the accounts;
- all accounting records have been provided to you for the purpose of your audit and all transactions undertaken by the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records. All other records and related information, including minutes of all management meetings which you have requested have been supplied to you; and
- all Related Parties and Related Party Transactions involving Councillors and senior staff of the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee have been properly disclosed.

All material accounting policies as adopted are detailed in note 1 to the accounts.

INTERNAL CONTROL

I acknowledge as Chief Financial Officer my responsibility for the design and implementation of internal controls to prevent and detect error and I have disclosed to you the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements could be materially misstated.

Annex A – Letter of Representation

I confirm that there were no data related incidents during the year which would have been required to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office.

I confirm that I have reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control and that the disclosures I have made are in accordance with DOE guidance on the Governance Statement.

FRAUD

I acknowledge as Chief Financial Officer my responsibility for the design and implementation of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud and I have disclosed to you the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements could be materially misstated as a result of fraud.

I am not aware of any fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee and no allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the financial statements has been communicated to me by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

ASSETS

General

All assets included in the Balance Sheet were in existence at the reporting period date and owned by the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee and free from any lien, encumbrance or charge, except as disclosed in the accounts.

Current Assets

On realisation in the ordinary course of the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee's operations the other current assets in the Balance Sheet are expected to produce at least the amounts at which they are stated. Adequate provision has been made against all amounts owing to the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee which are known, or may be expected, to be irrecoverable.

LIABILITIES

General

All liabilities have been recorded in the Balance Sheet. There were no significant losses in the year and no provisions for losses were required at the year end.

Contingent Liabilities

I am not aware of any pending litigation which may result in significant loss to the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee, and I am not aware of any action which is or may be brought against the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee under the Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 and the Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.

OTHER DISCLOSURES

Results

Except as disclosed in the accounts, the results for the period were not materially affected by transactions of a sort not usually undertaken by the Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee, or circumstances of an exceptional or non-recurring nature.

Unadjusted errors

There are no unadjusted errors remaining.

Annex A – Letter of Representation

Events after the Balance Sheet date

Except as disclosed in the accounts, there have been no material changes since the Balance Sheet date affecting liabilities and commitments, and no events or transactions have occurred which, though properly excluded from the accounts, are of such importance that they should have been brought to notice.

David Jackson
Chief Financial Officer
29 October 2014

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLEN STATUTORY TRANSITION COMMITTEE

I have audited the financial statements of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee for the period ended 31 March 2014 under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

This report is made solely to the Members of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee in accordance with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and for no other purpose, as specified in the Statement of Responsibilities.

Respective responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer and the independent auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee’s and Chief Financial Officer’s Responsibilities, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial period and the financial position as at the end of the financial period. My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice. I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board’s Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee’s circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition I read all the financial and non-financial information in the Statement of Accounts to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies I consider the implications for my report.

Opinion on financial statements

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements, of the financial position of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee as at 31 March 2014 and its income and expenditure for the period then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 and the Department of the Environment directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion the information given in the Explanatory Foreword for the financial period ended 31 March 2014 is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- The Governance Statement:
 - does not comply with proper practices specified by the Department of the Environment; or
 - is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the Statement of Accounts is not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Certificate

I certify that I have completed the audit of accounts of Causeway Coast and Glens Statutory Transition Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice.

Louise Mason

Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
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31 October 2014

Report on LAG Formation

For Facilitation Groups, JCC's, LAGs, Councils and DARD

Issue 2 24 November 2014

www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk

LAG (SOCIAL PARTNER) FORMATION UPDATE

- The LAG formation (social partner) process remains on target to achieve LAG Membership by 19th December 2014
- All 10 facilitation groups have now met and are helping to spread the word about the importance of LAG membership
- To date, 523 people have attended 12 public meetings across Northern Ireland with 210 LAG Membership forms received to date (breakdown per area attached)
- A further 18 first stage public meetings are scheduled to take place between 24th November and 11th December 2014
- Dates have also been agreed for 10 second stage public meetings, one in each new Council area. These meetings are primarily targeted at those attending the initial stage of public meetings and will provide more information on joining the Board.
- Two further regional events are being planned targeting women and young people.
- The youth event is confirmed for Tuesday 16th December 2014 in Loughry College, Cookstown from 7pm to 8.30pm. This event is being organised in partnership with YouthAction and YFCU.
- Details of the women's event will be released shortly.
- Existing LAG Board Members attending public meetings are welcome to share their experiences. Thanks to all those participating to date and if any LAG Member wishes to take part please get in touch.

Rural stakeholders show support at Sectoral Event

Representatives from a broad selection of organisations with a rural reach or interest gathered at Loughry College in Cookstown on November 5th to hear more about the formation of Local Action Groups and the role their organisations can potentially play in the process.

In total 88 delegates from 44 organisations attended the event which gave them a full insight into how important their support and contribution to the

formation of Local Action Groups will be in their areas.

Addressing the meeting,



Teresa Canavan, Rural Network for Northern Ireland, outlined the importance of engaging with different sectoral

organisations to help ensure each Local Action Group attracts as much support as possible as they set about delivering positive change in their rural areas.

She said: "With your support and your encouragement they will offer a real opportunity to shape, guide and deliver tangible transformations through initiatives that will improve the lives of rural communities across Northern Ireland."

Important Reminder for Existing LAG members

Existing LAG Board Members (social partners) are reminded that to be confirmed as a LAG member they **MUST** complete the relevant LAG Membership Registration form by 19th December 2014.

There is no continuation from the current LAG Board to the new LAG membership and/or LAG Board.

How you can help support LAG formation

- Tell people about the process and highlight the opportunities to get involved
- Promote the public meetings locally
- Encourage local attendance
- Widen the participation – help encourage more young people and women to get involved

Contact the Rural Network team
on 028 8676 6980

Membership Forms and other useful information now online

Important LAG information, meeting dates and membership forms can all now be found online.

To download all of the above simply log on to:

<http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/LEADER-2014~2020/>

Further public information dates and venues announced

Following on from the success of the first series of public information meetings, all dates and venues for all areas have been announced.

These meetings will help inform the public about the process and answer any questions they may have about the LAGs initiative. Membership forms will also be available at every meeting.

All meetings last for approximately two hours.



November 24th-

Garvagh, Garvagh Community Building (7.00pm)
Banbridge, Old Town Hall (7.00pm)
Holywood, Redburn Community Centre (7.00pm)

November 25th-

Downpatrick, St Patrick's Centre (7.30pm)

November 26th-

Ballymoney, The Millennium Centre, Loughgiel (7.00pm)
Craigavon, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre (7.00pm)
Lisburn, Island Civic Centre (7.30pm)

November 27th-

Hilltown, Downshire Arms (7.30pm)

December 1st-

Crossmaglen, Community Centre (7.30pm)
Strabane, District Council Offices (7.00pm)

December 3rd-

Kilkeel, Kilmorey Arms Hotel (7.30pm)
Claudy, The Diamond Centre (7.00pm)
Belcoo, Belcoo community Centre (7.30pm)

December 4th-

Lisnaskea, Castlepark Leisure Centre (7.30pm)

December 8th-

Creggan, An Creggan Visitors Centre (7.30pm)

December 10th-

Investown, Bawnacre Centre (7.30pm)

December 11th -

Fintona, Ecdesville Centre (7.30pm)

The public meeting process is being facilitated by the Rural Network for N. Ireland (managed by RDC) and Rural Support Networks

LAGs –The Next Stages

As the first stage of mobilising local interest via public meetings gathers pace, the next phase of the LAG process is almost ready to begin.

This will see the holding of a second series of public meetings. Building on the information delivered at the first meetings, these will begin to take a more specific look at the needs of individual areas as well as sharing further details on joining the LAG Board.

The closing date for receipt of LAG Membership Registration forms is Friday 19th December 2014 and the process of nomination and election of social partners to the LAG Board will take place during January 2015.

Details of the second set of public meetings will be made available online at www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk and published in the next edition of the newsletter.

Useful contacts

Area	Staff Contact/RSN
Antrim & Newtownabbey	Eamon McMullan RNNI South Antrim Community Network
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	Teresa Canavan RNNI TADA
Causeway Coast & Glens	Michael Kelly RNNI North Antrim Community Network
Derry & Strabane	Eamon McMullan RNNI RAPID Dennett Interchange
Fermanagh & Omagh	Olga Gallagher RNNI Fermanagh RCN Omagh Forum
Lisburn, Castlereagh & Rural Belfast	Seana Quinn RNNI TADA County Down RCN
Mid & East Antrim	Michael Kelly, RNNI North Antrim Community Network, South Antrim Community Network
Mid Ulster Area	Teresa Canavan RNNI CWSAN COSTA
North Down & Ards	Seana Quinn RNNI County Down RCN
Newry, Mourne & Down	Olga Gallagher RNNI TADA County Down RCN

All RNNI Staff can be contacted on 028 8676 6980

Frequently Asked Questions answered

As the public interest in the formation of Local Action Groups grows a series of Frequently Asked Questions has been devised.

These can be found on the [Rural Network website](http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk).

This section can help answer the most commonly asked questions about LAGs and covers topics such as their purpose, formation process and membership requirements.

FAQs will be updated on a regular basis but in the meantime you can contact us directly with your questions at info@ruralnetworkni.org.uk or on 028 8676 6980

Report on LAG Formation

For Facilitation Groups, JCCs, LAGs, Councils and DARD

Issue 3 4 December 2014

www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk

LAG (SOCIAL PARTNER) FORMATION UPDATE

- LAG formation continues to attract huge public interest with almost 1,000 attendees to the first 20 public meetings
- With 10 first phase public sessions remaining, 407 individuals have already signed up for LAG membership (includes postal & email forms)
- The remaining initial public meetings for all areas have now been arranged and these will come to an end on December 11th.
- The second stage of public meetings will commence on December 8th and run until December 16th (full details, dates and venues of all Second and remaining First phase meetings are in this update)
- These meetings are primarily targeted at those who have attended the initial phase of public meetings.
- Each session will give further information of the LAG formation process as well as an insight into the establishment of the LAG Boards
- In addition to this, two sector specific regional events have been organised
- A youth focused event will take place on December 16th in Loughry College, Cookstown from 7pm to 8.30pm. This event is being organised in partnership with YouthAction and YFCU.
- A women's event is also planned. Venue, date and time to be confirmed.
- LAG Information Sheet Three & LAG Board Forms are currently being produced and will be available at www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk from December 8th.
- Existing LAG Board Members (social partners) are reminded that to be confirmed as a LAG member they **MUST** complete the relevant LAG Membership Registration.
- Don't forget, the membership registration deadline for everyone is December 19th
- As always, thank you for your support throughout this process

Still time to get in on the local rural development

The LAG formation process is progressing well but there's still time to help get even more people involved in the £70million LEADER initiative.

With the closing date for membership registration on December 19th drawing close, a second phase of information sessions will commence on December 8th.

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is asking all facilitators to help make sure everyone with an interest in becoming a LAG member attends and signs up before the registration closing date of Friday, 19th December.

Teresa Canavan, Chief Executive of the Rural Development Council (RDC) speaking on behalf of the Rural Network for Northern Ireland, said:

"The contribution of local people is the key ingredient in making Local Action Groups successful. We are hugely encouraged by the public response to them to date and thank the various stakeholders who have helped us promote these events.

"However, there are still opportunities for even more people to get involved and help shape their rural areas.

"We are urging anyone aged 18 or over with an interest in the future prosperity and development of their local rural areas to sign up to their Local Action Group and be part of the positive change."



Rural Development Minister, Michelle O'Neill MLA, pictured with Rural Support Network representatives as they prepare for the second stage of public information sessions ahead of the registration deadline on December 19th.
(l to r: Barry Boyle, Michelle O'Neill MLA, Christopher Spence, Majella Murphy, Brendan McCann, Mary T Conway, Michael Kelly)

As well as holding a second series of public meetings in a variety of locations across the country, membership forms and all relevant information on LAGs can be found at:

www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk

Latest public information dates and venues

All Stage One and Two meetings have been arranged and are detailed below.

Stage ONE:

December 1st-

Crossmaglen, Community Centre (7.30pm)

Limavady, Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre (7.00pm)

Strabane, Strabane Council Offices (7.00pm)

December 3rd-

Kilkeel, Kilmorey Arms Hotel (7.30pm)

Belcoo, Belcoo Community Centre (7.30pm)

December 4th-

Lisnaskea, Castlepark Leisure Centre (7.30pm)

December 8th-

Creggan, An Creggan Visitors Centre (7.30pm)

December 10th-

Irvinestown, Bawnacre Centre (7.30pm)

December 11th-

Fintona, Ecdesville Centre (7.30pm)

Stage TWO:

December 8th-

Lisburn, Island Civic Centre (7.30pm)

Antrim, Greenmount College (7.00pm)

December 9th-

Cookstown, Loughry College (7.00pm)

Larne, Willowbank Resource Centre (7.00pm)

Newry, Canal Court (7.30pm)

Newtownards, Queen's Hall (7.00pm)

December 10th-

Craigavon, Civic Centre (7.00pm)

Artigarvan, Community Centre (7.00pm)

December 11th-

Coleraine, Bann Gallery, Council Offices (7.00pm)

December 16th-

Irvinestown, Bawnacre Centre (7.30pm)

The public meeting process is being facilitated by the Rural Network for N. Ireland (managed by RDC) and Rural Support Networks

Useful contacts

Area	Staff Contact/RSN
Antrim & Newtownabbey	Eamon McMullan RNNI South Antrim Community Network
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	Teresa Canavan RNNI TADA
Causeway Coast & Glens	Michael Kelly RNNI North Antrim Community Network
Derry & Strabane	Eamon McMullan RNNI RAPID Dennett Interchange
Fermanagh & Omagh	Olga Gallagher RNNI Fermanagh RCN Omagh Forum
Lisburn, Castlereagh & Rural Belfast	Seana Quinn RNNI TADA County Down RCN
Mid & East Antrim	Michael Kelly, RNNI North Antrim Community Network, South Antrim Community Network
Mid Ulster Area	Teresa Canavan RNNI CWSAN COSTA
North Down & Ards	Seana Quinn RNNI County Down RCN
Newry, Moume & Down	Olga Gallagher RNNI TADA County Down RCN

All RNNI Staff can be contacted on 028 8676 6980

Membership Forms now available online

LAG membership forms can be downloaded at:
<http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/LEADER-2014~2020/Downloads>

Youth engagement event announced

As the formation of new Local Action Groups gathers pace across Northern Ireland, young people aged 18 to 30 are being reminded of the huge role they can play in helping to shape rural development in their local areas.

To help make sure this is seized, the Rural Network for Northern Ireland in Association with YouthAction Northern Ireland, YFCU and the Rural Youth Entrepreneurship (RYE) Programme have organised a special information event aimed specifically at young people aged 18 and over who live or work in rural areas.

This will be held in the Conference Room at Loughry College from 7.00pm to 8.30pm on Tuesday, December 16 and this invitation is extended to all young people with an interest in the development of rural areas and their communities.

The informal session will give more information on the programme, how to get involved and the huge role young people can play in every LAG.

Your help in encouraging as many young people aged 18 to 30 to attend this event will be invaluable and greatly appreciated.

LAG membership is a great way for young people living and working in rural areas to put their wealth of skills and knowledge to good use in ensuring much needed positive changes become a reality for our rural locations.

For more information on the event please visit www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk 'Like' our [Facebook](#) Page, Follow us on [Twitter](#) or telephone 028 8676 6980



Find the latest LAG updates on Facebook & Twitter



LAG FORMATION:**Summary to date: (21.11.14)**

No of first public meetings held to date	12
Numbers attending to date	523
Registration forms received to date (incl postal/email)	210
No of first public meetings yet to take place	18
No of second stage public meetings yet to take place	10

Information per area:-

Area	Mid Ulster	Mid and East Antrim	Antrim & N'abbey	Causeway Coast & Glens	North Down & Ards	Armagh Banbridge, Craigavon	Newry Mourne and Down	Lisburn Castlereagh Rural Belfast	Derry Strabane	Fermanagh Omagh
No of first and second public meetings organised	4	4	3	5	4	4	5	2	3	6
No of meetings held to date	3	3	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
Numbers attending to date	194	60	79	31	88	71	0	0	0	0
Registration forms received to date (incl postal/email)	81	24	15	12	40	31	0	1	3	3

Local Action Group Update

Keeping you informed on rural development in your local area

Issue 2 17 November 2014

www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk



Welcome to the second edition of LAG Update.

The formation process is now underway and we are delighted at the interest being shown by the public at the information evenings during this very exciting time for Rural Development in Northern Ireland.

The success and reach of Local Action Groups will depend on the contribution of local people.

Using their collective skills and knowledge they will help design, guide and implement appropriate solutions to meet the major challenges in their local rural areas.

For this to be as successful as possible it is vital that support for the public info meetings continues to go from strength to strength.

Your contribution will help make the difference.

Public meetings are taking place throughout November and December, we look forward to seeing you there.

Excellent response as public information meetings get underway

Public Information meetings got underway last week with five sessions in Larne, Newtownabbey, Magherafelt, Ballymena and Dungannon. These meetings attracted over 200 participants and helped give local people a valuable insight into the Local Action Group formation process and just how important their input and contribution to their LAG will be.

A further 18 meetings will take place across Northern Ireland in the coming weeks with at least 5 more due to be confirmed for the Fermanagh & Omagh and Derry & Strabane areas. Watch this space or log on to www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk for more information on meetings and LAGs.



Attendees at the Newtownabbey Public Information Meeting

Further dates and venues are confirmed...

Following on from the success of the first series of public information meetings, more dates and venues have been announced. These meetings will help inform the public about

the process and answer any questions they may have about the LAGs initiative. Please note, all meetings start at 7pm and last until 9pm unless otherwise stated.

November 17th-
Armagh, The Loft, Palace Stables
Ballygowan, Ballygowan Village Hall

November 18th-
Cookstown, Assembly Hall, Loughry College,
Antrim, Steeple Suite, Antrim Civic Centre,

November 19th-
Carrickfergus, Oakfield Community Centre

November 20th-
Cushendun, Glenmona House
Carrowdore, Carrowdore Community Centre

November 24th-
Garvagh, Garvagh Community Building
Banbridge, Old Town Hall
Holywood, Redburn Community Centre

November 25th-
Downpatrick, St Patrick's Centre (7.30pm-9.30pm)

November 26th-
Ballymoney, The Millennium Centre, Loughgiel
Craigavon, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre
Lisburn, Island Civic Centre (7.30pm-9.30pm)

November 27th-
Hilltown, Downshire Arms (7.30pm-9.30pm)

December 1st-
Crossmaglen, Community Centre (7.30pm-9.30pm)

December 3rd-
Kilkeel, Kilmorey Arms Hotel (7.30pm-9.30pm)

Sectoral information event proves popular with rural stakeholders

Representatives from a broad selection of organisations with a rural reach or interest gathered at Loughry College in Cookstown on November 5th to hear more about the formation of Local Action groups and the role their



Guests at the Sectoral Event held in Loughry College

organisations can potentially play in the process.

In total 88 delegates from 44 organisations attended the event which gave them a full insight into the how important their support and contribution to the formation of Local Action Groups will be.

Addressing the meeting, Teresa Canavan, Chief Executive of the Rural Development Council, outlined the need for backing from facilitation groups and their members to help ensure each Local Action Group

attracts as much support as possible as they set about delivering positive change in their rural areas.

She said: "The formation of LAGs is an integral aspect of the RDP and a positive step for rural communities and businesses here.

"With your support and your encouragement they will offer local people a real opportunity to shape, guide and deliver positive transformation through initiatives that will improve the lives of rural Communities across N.Ireland."

Your Frequently Asked Questions answered

As Local Action Groups public information sessions take place across Northern Ireland a number of regular questions have been posed at these meetings.

To help address this a new FAQ section has been compiled on the Rural Network website. This will be updated on a regular basis but in the meantime a few of the most common questions are addressed below.

Is there any cost to join the LAG?

No, LAG membership is free. You just need to complete a membership registration form and submit by 19th December 2014.

What is the benefit of joining of a LAG?

Becoming a member of your Local Action Group will:-

- Give you timely and relevant access to information on the Rural Development Programme locally
- Provide you with the opportunity to shape your local rural development plan
- Stimulate ideas for local development and introduce you to a wider network of contacts
- Enable you to stand for Board elections and/or give you access to your Local Action Group Board
- Be part of a bigger movement of rural development interests locally, nationally and internationally
- Help to address rural poverty, create jobs and develop the services your local area needs

I am on the Board of the current Local Action Group for the 2007-2013 Programme, do I automatically get considered for the new Board?

No. The Local Action Groups being established to deliver LEADER in the 2014-2020 programming period will be entirely new with their own memberships and procedures.

There will be no continuity between the current and new LAGs. If you are interested in joining the Board of the new LAG you will have to follow the appropriate process.

Calling all Young People-your LAG needs YOU

Young people aged 18 and over are being specifically invited to get involved in the £70m Local Action Groups initiative.

As the process of forming LAGs across Northern Ireland begins in earnest, specific under represented groups are being actively encouraged to get involved and help

usher in changes that will make a real difference in their local areas.

Among those being targeted to consider membership are young people aged 18 and over who live or work in rural areas.

Membership of a LAG is not a demanding role. However, the rewards

are great as they offer local people a real chance to engage in the development of their local area and receive information on the programme.

Importantly, it also allows local people to appoint representation to a LAG Board that will take responsibility for the delivery of the programme.

Membership Forms and other useful information now online

Important LAG information, meeting dates and membership forms can all now be found online.

To download all of the above simply log on to:

<http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/>

Local Action Group Update

Keeping you informed on rural development in your local area

Issue 3

4 December 2014

www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk



Welcome to the latest edition of LAG Update.

All public information sessions are finalised and will see the first stage of meetings come to a close on December 11.

To date, the public response to LAG and the appetite for LAG membership has been incredible with around 1,000 people attending the meetings and over 400 signing up to play their part and help shape rural development in their local areas.

In the coming weeks a second stage of public meetings will be held across Northern Ireland.

These will provide further information on LAGs and will also start to look at the needs of individual areas and the types of things that might be included for funding and the LAG Board process

Dates, venues and times for all of these meetings can be found in this newsletter

Still time to get in on the local rural development Action



Rural Development Minister, Michelle O'Neill MLA, pictured with Rural Support Network representatives as they prepare for the second stage of public information sessions ahead of the registration deadline on December 19th. (l to r: Barry Boyle, Michelle O'Neill MLA, Christopher Spence, Majella Murphy, Brendan McCann, Mary T Conway, Michael Kelly)

There's still time to get involved and help create positive change in rural areas across Northern Ireland through the £70million LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) initiative.

Following on from the phenomenal success of the first stage of public meetings, a second set of information sessions will commence on December 8th and the Rural Network for Northern Ireland is urging everyone with an interest in becoming a LAG members to make sure they sign up before the registration closing date of Friday, 19th December.

Teresa Canavan, Chief Executive of the Rural Development Council (RDC) speaking on behalf of the Rural Network for Northern Ireland, said:

"The contribution of local people is the key ingredient in making Local Action Groups successful. We are hugely encouraged by the public response to them to date but there is always a need for more members and anyone with an interest in their local rural area should

seriously consider membership.

"I would urge anyone aged 18 or over to come along to our public meetings or read about the initiative on our website.

"As well as holding a second series of public meetings in a variety of locations across the country, membership forms and all relevant information on LAGs including the dates and venues for the next set of meetings can be found on the Rural Network for Northern Ireland website www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk

"For LAGs to be truly effective it is vital that as many local people as possible get involved and share their skills, knowledge and experience in the creation of plans, schemes and projects that will reduce poverty, improve employment opportunities and help rural areas to flourish and survive.

"I would urge everyone with an interest in the future prosperity and development of their local rural areas to sign up to their Local Action Group and be part of the positive change."

Youth engagement event announced

As the formation of new Local Action Groups gathers pace across Northern Ireland, young people aged 18 to 30 are being reminded of the huge role they can play in helping to shape rural development in their local areas.

To help make sure this is seized, the Rural Network for Northern Ireland in Association with YouthAction Northern Ireland, YFCU and the Rural Youth Entrepreneurship (RYE) Programme have organised a special information event aimed specifically at young people aged 18 and over who live or work in rural areas.

This will be held in the Conference Room at Loughry College from 7.00pm to 8.30pm on Tuesday, December 16 and this invitation is extended to all young

people with an interest in the development of rural areas and their communities.

The informal session will give more information on the programme, how to get involved and provide an insight into the huge role young people can play.

Michael Reid, Chief Executive Officer, YFCU, said:

“I welcome this event to give young people the opportunity to explore how they can be involved in decision making processes in their community.

“Young people living and working in rural areas are an untapped resource and being able to contribute to local decision making processes is a great way for young people to put their wealth of skills and knowledge to good use.”

Caroline Redpath, Assistant Director YouthAction Northern Ireland, said:

“Getting involved in different ways with Local Action Groups have the potential to offer young people aged 18-30 a terrific opportunity to engage in the development of their local rural area.

“We welcome this call from the Minister and would encourage all young people with an interest in their community to come along and explore how they can get involved and bring real and positive change to their rural area.”

For more information on the event please visit www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk ‘Like’ our [Facebook](#) Page, Follow us on [Twitter](#) or telephone 028 8676 6980

Membership Forms and other useful information now online

Important LAG information, meeting dates and membership forms can all now be found online.

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Important Reminder for Existing LAG members

To avoid disappointment, existing LAG Board Members (social partners) are being reminded that in order to be confirmed as a LAG member they **MUST** complete the relevant LAG Membership Registration form by 19th December 2014.

Please note that there is no continuation from the current LAG Board to the new LAG membership and/or LAG Board.

The new LAGs require new membership registrations from everyone keen to get involved.

Latest public information dates and venues

Details for the remaining Stage One meetings and new Stage Two events

Stage ONE:

December 1st-

Crossmaglen, Community Centre (7.30pm)

Limavady, Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre (7.00pm)

Strabane, Strabane Council Offices (7.00pm)

December 3rd-

Kilkeel, Kilmorey Arms Hotel (7.30pm)

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Creggan, An Creggan Visitors Centre (7.30pm)

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Investown, Bawnacre Centre (7.30pm)

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Antrim, Greenmount College (7.00pm)

December 9th-

Cookstown, Loughry College (7.00pm)

Lame, Willowbank Resource Centre (7.00pm)

Newry, Canal Court (7.30pm)

Newtownards, Queen's Hall (7.00pm)

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Coleraine, Bann Gallery, Council Offices (7.00pm)

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Investown, Bawnacre Centre (7.30pm)



The public meeting process is being facilitated by the Rural Network for N. Ireland (managed by RDC) and Rural Support Networks

