



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Northern Ireland Local Government Association Subscription
Date:	Friday 17 February 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney (ext 6202)

1.0	<u>RELEVANT BACKGROUND</u>
1.1	The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) acts as a voice and representation body for elected Members from local government; providing a forum for collective discussion on regionally significant policy issues and assisting with the formation of collective policy position as necessary. It acts as an interface between local government, as a sector, and the NI Executive, government departments, parliament and other key institutions.
1.2	NILGA is supported by all the main political parties in Northern Ireland with 25 of the 26 local councils being current members (with Newtownabbey not a member). It comprises of 147 elected representatives and a 27 (+ 5 observers) Executive Committee including a President and 4 Vice-Presidents.
2.0	<u>KEY ISSUES</u>
	<i>Role of Belfast City Council within NILGA</i>
2.1	Belfast City Council has currently 17 elected Members nominated onto NILGA with 1 Member designated as an Office Bearer and as members of the NILGA Executive (see Appendix 1). A number of BCC elected Members are represented on the established NILGA working groups such as 'Modernisation and Reform', Planning, Waste and Environment.
2.2	Whilst recognising the important role of NILGA as an advocate/champion for local government and in providing advice and policy support to the sector, the Council would not currently require or fully avail of the support provided by NILGA to the same extent as other councils. This is as a result of the level of internal capacity which exists within the Council, the capability to develop and coalesce around corporate positions on emerging policy issues and to secure direct access to the NI Executive, Ministers, central government departments and other important national and European institutions.
2.3	Notwithstanding, we are entering a period of significant change, with local government reform and the future of European Structural Funds under review. Whilst the Council will continue to directly seek to influence, shape and drive forward these and other critical matters for the economy and the sector, it will be important that we do not lose sight of the importance of engaging with and informing the wider local government sector's consideration and approach to such matters. The continued participation and engagement in NILGA will be an important strand of this. Some of the important issues which NILGA are seeking to influence on behalf of the LG sector and which the Council have a direct interest and focus include e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Shaping the future direction of local government reform ii. Shaping future planning policy and reform iii. Lobby for the development of an urban policy agenda/strategy which recognises and supports the strategic significance of urban areas as key regional economic drivers iv. Maximising the level of investment secured through European sources for Belfast. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaping the future direction of EU Structural Funds 2014-2020 – it is understood that there is 3.76b Euros agreed for 2014-2020 Structural Funds. Whilst the NI block allocation is still to be negotiated and agreed, £356m was secured in last round which

	<p>finishes in 2013. It is likely that the new NI allocation is of a similar scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence the allocation of other emerging European funding streams (e.g. Horizon 2020; Framework 7) <p>v. Supporting the development of a new central/local government relationship</p>
	<i>Belfast City Council Annual Subscription Fee</i>
2.4	NILGA request an annual Belfast City Council subscription fee of circa £107,500 (excluding VAT) which is calculated based on the relative strength of the penny rate product for councils. This equates to approximately 25% of NILGA's total subscription base.
2.5	Members will note that in considering its annual subscription fee to NILGA, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee previously agreed to pay a reduced subscription fee of circa £76,500 for the periods 2009/2010 and 2010/2011. This subscription had been calculated on the basis of the Council's population size relative to the other councils. This reduced subscription fee represents 18.5% of NILGA's total subscriptions and is on par with the subscription contributions made by the larger/capital city councils in other jurisdictions towards their local government association (e.g. Cardiff contributes 17% towards the Welsh Local Government Association and Glasgow contributes 19% towards Convention of Scottish Local Authorities).
2.6	NILGA has been recently in contact requesting that the Council consider (i) the 2011/2012 annual subscription payment, which has not yet to be released and (ii) the incoming 2012/2013 subscription payment. Based on the previous precedent set by the Committee, Members are asked to consider whether they would wish to agree to pay the NILGA annual subscription fee for the periods 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 at the reduced £76,500 annual payment. This reflects the previously agreed BCC subscription payment and is similar to the contributions made by both Cardiff and Glasgow towards their local government association.
2.7	Now that local government reform appears to be back on the agenda, it will be critical that NILGA fundamentally review its future role and focus within the context of the new 11 stronger council environment. During the next 1-3 year transition period, it will be important that the Council continues to work alongside NILGA, its Executive Committee and Office Bearers to explore how the Association can evolve and provide maximum benefit to the sector post reform.

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial and Human Resources

If Members agree to pay the proposed reduced subscription fee for the periods 2011/2012 and 2012/13, the financial implications would include:

- £76,500 (excluding VAT) for 2011/2012; and
- £76,500 (excluding VAT) for the period 2012/2013.

Initial discussions with the Director of Finance and Resources has indicated that adequate funding remains in the 2011/2012 corporate subscriptions budget and the agreed 2012/2013 budget estimates to cover subscription payment if agreed by Members.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the foregoing report and whether they would wish to agree payment of the NILGA annual subscription for the periods 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 at the reduced fee of £76,500.

5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: NILGA BCC Membership and Executive Committee Membership

Belfast City Council NILGA Membership – January 2012

1. Councillor Tim Attwood
2. Alderman Tom Ekin
3. Councillor Matt Garrett
4. Councillor Tom Haire
5. Councillor Deirdre Hargey
6. Councillor Tom Hartley
7. Councillor John Hussey
8. Councillor Mervyn Jones
9. Councillor Brian Kingston
10. Councillor John Kyle
11. Councillor Nichola Mallon
12. Councillor Patrick McCarthy
13. Councillor Jim McVeigh
14. Councillor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín
15. Councillor Adam Newton
16. Alderman Jim Rodgers
17. Councillor Guy Spence



Confirmation of NILGA Members
(January) 2012

Confirmation of Office Bearers

President Cllr Evelyne Robinson (Ballymoney, DUP)

Vice-Presidents

Cllr Sean McPeake (Magherafelt, SF)

Cllr Arnold Hatch (Craigavon, UUP)

Cllr Dermot Curran (Down, SDLP)

Cllr Tom Ekin (Belfast, AP)

Confirmation of Executive Membership

DUP

Cllr Roger Burton (Dungannon & South Tyrone)

Cllr Mrs Freda Donnelly (Armagh)

Cllr John Hussey (Belfast)

Ald Maurice Mills (Ballymena)

Cllr Jenny Palmer (Lisburn)

Cllr Paul Robinson (Fermanagh)

Cllr Denny Vitty (Castlereagh)

Cllr Peter Weir MLA (North Down)

SDLP

Cllr Seamus Doyle (Banbridge)

Ald PJ McAvoy (Ballymena)

Cllr John O'Kane (Fermanagh)

Vacancy (Derry)

Sinn Fein

Cllr Sean Begley (Omagh)

Cllr Mickey Cooper (Derry)

Cllr Brendan Curran (Banbridge)

Cllr Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín (Belfast)

Cllr Sean McGuigan (Dungannon & South Tyrone)

Cllr Margaret McKillop (Moyle)

Cllr Mickey Ruane (Newry and Mourne)

Alliance

Cllr Alan Lawther (Antrim)

Cllr Stephen Martin (Lisburn)

Chief Executives

Mr Ashley Boreland (Ards)

Mr Thomas McCall (Newry and Mourne)

Mr David McCammick (Antrim)

Mr Daniel McSorley (Omagh)

UUP

Cllr Alex Baird (Fermanagh)

Cllr Mrs Joan Baird MBE (Banbridge)

Cllr Robert Burgess (Down)

Ald Jim Dillon (Lisburn)

Cllr Mrs Marion Smith (North Down)

Observers

Ald Michael Coyle (Limavady)

Cllr Eric Ferguson (Carrickfergus)

Ald Robert Gibson (Ards)

Cllr William King MBE (Coleraine)

Cllr Kieran McGuire (Strabane)

Cllr Mark McKinty (Larne)