

## NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

---

### **Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 25 January 2016 at 6pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

---

In the Chair                      Councillor M Ruane

**In attendance:                      (Councillors)**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor R Burgess
Councillor S Burns	Councillor P Clarke
Councillor W Clarke	Councillor G Craig
Councillor G Donnelly	Councillor C Enright
Councillor H Harvey	Councillor M Larkin
Councillor K Loughran	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor K McAteer	Councillor C McGrath
Councillor M Murnin	Councillor B Ó'Muirí
Councillor B Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J J Tinnelly
Councillor B Walker	

**(Officials)**

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive  
Mr J McBride, Change Manager  
Mrs E McParland, Democratic Services Manager  
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Officer

**Also in attendance:**    Mr D McCallan, NILGA

**C/19/2016                      APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Carr, Casey, Curran, Devlin, Fitzpatrick, Hanna, Harte, Hearty, Hyland, Kimmins, McKee and Stokes.

**C/20/2016                      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**C/21/2016                      PRESENTATION BY NILGA  
CONSULTATION ON: DEVELOPING A PROGRAMME FOR  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2016 to 2020**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr McCallan to the meeting and invited him to make his presentation.

Mr McCallan thanked the Chairperson for the invitation to attend to make his presentation. He advised the presentation would focus on NILGA's support for the principles of a Programme for Local Government, support for the Council Lead Work Plan for 2016/17 and to find out Council's view on the future role of NIHE.

Mr McCallan advised NILGA's role between now and 2017 was to aim high, to establish a means by which Councils approach their future with unity of purpose, common core competencies, a collective corporate will with regional representation of the highest impact and quality. He stated to do this NILGA would present a cohesive, strong, clear message and vision which highlight the service, quality, democratic mandate and community benefits of sustainable local Councils, delivered by NILGA, led by the member Councils.

The Chairperson thanked Mr McCallan for his presentation and invited questions from the Members.

Members asked the following questions:

- Was there still a possibility that Councils will inherit powers for roads?
- Was there any progress on the fact that Councillors pay tax on expenses which staff do not?
- What do other Councils provide to Members in terms of telecommunications?
- Measures need to be put in place to examine the effectiveness of DSD controlling local regeneration.
- Community Plan was being developed at present, however a lot of statutory partners have bought into this, in name only. These very robust, overarching plans should be used to inform and shape local government going forward.
- Was there anything that NILGA can do to better use the Partnership Panel as an effective tool?
- Long-term plans need to be put in place in terms of proper road infrastructure and provisions of health service.
- Small market towns are badly affected by the variation in rates and trade was moving elsewhere.

Mr McCallan responded to the points as follows:

- Although the 2007 Draft Local Government Act had included local roads, off-street parking and libraries, the 2010 Act did not put this provision in place. In any centralised society, the local authority should be responsible for emptying gullies etc. and therefore a conversation needs to take place with central government to ensure the correct functions are placed in the correct place, along with the resources to get the job done.
- HMRC and National Association of Councillors are investigating the matter of Councillors paying tax on expenses and telecommunications.
- NILGA are lobbying to have measures put in place whereby Council have authority to use the resources of others. A lot of good partnership working exists

within Europe and Northern Ireland and NILGA are working with OFMDFM to have finance in place for INTERREG, without the need for Councils to put resources into any projects.

- There is too much government in Northern Ireland and better governance is required. The new First Minister stands with local government in support and full recognition of the importance of Community Planning.
- The Partnership Panel should not be mechanistic and should be about setting policy to influence the design of the next Programme for Government.
- There should be a better way to finance public service. Proposals would be forthcoming to allow variations on business rates and NILGA are open for creative ways to fund the public sector as the current way is not fit for purpose.

Read: Report dated 25 January 2016 from Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive, setting out a recommended response to NILGA consultation on developing a Programme for Local Government (2016-2020) (copy circulated).

**ACTION:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor D McAteer to approve the contents of report dated 25 January 2016 from the Chief Executive and submit this as the Council's formal response to the NILGA consultation: Developing a Programme for Local Government (2016-2020).

**There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.50pm**

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chief Executive**