



Call for evidence by the Committee of the Environment on the Local Government Bill.

**Response on behalf of
Ballymena Borough Council**

November 2013



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Submission from Ballymena Borough Council

1. Introduction

This document provides details of the response of Ballymena Borough Council to the Committee for the Environment's Call for Evidence on the Local Government Bill.

The Local Government Bill was formally introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 23 September 2013 and received its Second Reading on 1 October 2013. The Bill has now been referred to the Committee for the Environment, who have opened a Call for Evidence from all interested parties, with a closing date of 12 November 2013.

2. Comments

Ballymena Borough Council is broadly supportive of the reform of local government. We firmly believe that local government is key to the effective and joined-up delivery of all public services on the ground. Our Corporate Plan is very much aligned with the focus, drive and strategic priorities outlined in the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government and supporting Economic and Investment Strategies.

Ballymena Borough Council continue to work proactively with our colleagues in Carrickfergus Borough Council and Larne Borough Council in order to complete all necessary preparations to ensure a smooth transition to Mid and East Antrim Council.

A number of the provisions contained in the Bill cater for additional powers, duties and responsibilities for councils. We particularly welcome the Community Planning Duty, as Council has adopted a community planning approach over a number of years and much has been achieved by that approach.

In preparing this response to the Call for Evidence, we have offered comments on a number of the provisions in the Local Government Bill.

Ballymena Borough Council are broadly supportive of the response compiled by NILGA. We would however wish to make the following additional comments:

- We welcome and endorse the General Power of Competence and see great potential for our local areas through this power;
- It is imperative that the Code of Conduct pays due regard to the issues associated with the transfer of the planning function. In particular, this should recognise the complexity and potential legal implications associated with the transfer of the planning function. Members were particularly concerned and wished to be reassured that appropriate legal advice and support would be available on all occasions.

3. Further information

For Further information, please contact Anne Donaghy, Chief Executive: Email: Anne.Donaghy@ballymena.gov.uk ; Tel: 028 2566 0300.

4. NILGA response - attached