

AILG

Association of Irish Local Government
Aontas Rialtas Áitiúil na hÉireann

Activity Report

2021 - 2022



A STRONG VOICE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



Laois County Council
Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, Co. Laois



Leitrim
County Council
Comhairle Chontae Liatroma



CARLOW
COUNTY COUNCIL



WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council



AN LONGFORT
Comhairle Chontae An Longfort
Longford County Council
CONNECTED
People | Place | Opportunity



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council



Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



Comhairle Contae
an Chabháin
Cavan
County Council



Comhairle Contae
Loch Garman
Wexford
County Council



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin
Wicklow County Council



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin
Roscommon
County Council



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin
Monaghan County Council



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



Sligo County Council
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council



Comhairle Contae Chiarraí
Kerry County Council



Comhairle Contae County Council



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Phort Láirge
Waterford City
& County Council



Comhairle Contae
Átha Cliath Theas
South Dublin County Council



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Luimnigh
Limerick City
& County Council



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

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Message from the President

It gives me great pleasure to present the AILG Annual Activity Report for 2021-22.

If there was a single word to describe the past year for councillors, their member authorities and the communities we serve, it would be recovery. Following a difficult two years lost to the Covid pandemic, a huge focus for AILG in 2022 was to resume and enhance our in-person training programme. Members who have attended our training modules will know that these sessions are hugely important in enabling councillors to learn not only from the insights and contributions of guest speakers and experts but from their peers also.

The AILG, has in a short space of time, become an effective voice for the 949 elected members in our local government system. 2022 has certainly been another important year for AILG. It saw the launch of our first-ever third-level training partnership with the University College Cork which empowered county councillors to respond to climate crisis at local government level.

"The AILG, has in a short space of time, become an effective voice for the 949 elected members in our local government system."

As a representative body, these are the types of supports that we strive and need to deliver to our members to ensure that they have the proper skillset and knowledge to help them in their role as local authority elected members. We are delighted at the success of our Elected Member Training Programme and our online training programme which has continued to grow and expand. Throughout the year the Association has also had substantial engagement with a wide range of stakeholders impacting on the local government environment including government departments, state agencies and regulators, counterpart local government associations, and, of course, members throughout the country.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge the achievements and contributions of my predecessors, and past Executives. Their unwavering commitment and dedication to the association has seen AILG grow from strength to strength. I am also indebted to the staff for their dedication to serving and supporting our members and the association. With the difficult realities that local authorities continue to face including rising costs, inflation and the daunting reality of climate change, our members need our support now more than ever. AILG remains committed to the task and ensuring that the voice of the local councillor is put back into the heart of local government.

Councillor Pat Fitzpatrick
AILG President 2022-23

Message from the Directors



Tom Moylan

Director



Liam Kenny

Director

It gives us great pleasure to report on the AILG's (Association of Irish Local Government) activities for the year 2021 - 2022.

With the help of the association's Officers, Executive Committee and Delegates, we have instigated an intensive lobbying campaign over the course of the last eight years to ensure that the voice of the local councillor is heard on local government issues at all times. The role of the councillor has evolved and changed rapidly in the past few years, and AILG have worked tirelessly to develop, support, and help our members to respond to massive changes and challenges that have taken place in local government.

During the course of the last eight years it has been the association's priority that councillors' voices would be listened to and accepted by national politicians, the department or indeed our council executives and that the days of being side-lined would be over. It has been our objective that a re-balancing has to take place and that as councillors, our members are re-asserting their authority.

It has been a pleasure working alongside the Officer board, Executive Committee and members to innovate and advance the Association. Despite a challenging year, we are confident we'll build on the progress we've made in the years to come.

Liam Kenny & Tommy Moylan

Directors AILG

1. Who We Are

The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) was formally established in July 2014. The association has two parent associations - the Association of County & City Councils and the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland. Following the local government reforms of 2014 both organisations merged voluntarily to form the Association of Irish Local Government.

The AILG is a **networking, policy development and training resource** for the elected members of Ireland's thirty-one County and City Councils. Through regular interaction with other stakeholders in the local government environment AILG aims to ensure that the contribution of Ireland's democratically elected councillors is appreciated in government departments and throughout the full range of public agencies.

The growth of AILG over the past eight years has been propelled collectively by the elected members and all the past presidents and past members of the Executive Committee.



Governance, Responsibilities and Structures

"AILG is committed to observing and operating out of the highest standards of governance for the organisation, in line with best practice and legislative requirements."

The AILG is governed under both the 2001 and 2014 Local Government Acts, following a merger of the two previous national representative bodies after the 2014 local government reforms.

The Association is structured on each of the 31 local authorities nominating three delegates to AILG (93 delegates in total) for the full 5 year-term of any local election period. We have 3 full-time staff members.

AILG Committees

Officers and Executive Committee

The Officer Board comprises of our President, Vice President and Past President.

The President & Vice President are elected each year by Plenary Delegates at the association's annual AGM and are responsible for implementing and delivering the strategy and policies of AILG, in conjunction with the Executive Committee and Management Team.

Officers 2021 - 2022

- Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, President
- Cllr. Nick Killian, Vice-President
- Cllr. Mary Hoade, Past President

Executive Committee Members 2021-2022

- Cllr. Joe Leddin
- Cllr. Kate Feeney
- Cllr. Arthur McDonald
- Cllr. John King
- Cllr. Noel Cribbin
- Cllr. Gráinne Maguire
- Cllr. Patrick McGowan
- Cllr. Fintan Brett
- Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald
- Cllr. Charlie Farrelly

Officers 2022 - 2023

- Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, President
- Cllr. Patrick McGowan, Vice-President
- Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, Past President

Executive Committee Members 2022-2023

- Cllr. Michael Cahill
- Cllr. Emma Blain
- Cllr. Joe Behan
- Cllr. Peter McVitty
- Cllr. Rosaleen O' Grady
- Cllr. Anthony Waldron
- Cllr. Danny Owens
- Cllr. Eamon Aylward
- Cllr. Gerry McMonagle
- Cllr. Tom Farrell

Governance, Responsibilities and Structures

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for all matters relating to financial planning and budgeting, resource and expenditure management, financial monitoring and reporting to the Executive Committee.

Finance Committee Members 2019 - 2024

- AILG Officer Board (i.e President, Vice President, Past President)
- Cllr. John Paul Feeley
- Cllr. Cyril Burke (Incoming member)
- Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan
(term of office ended September 2022)

Audit Committee

The primary purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide oversight of the financial reporting process, the audit process, the associations system of internal controls, internal procedures, risk assessment and management and compliance with laws and regulations. The Audit Committee has an independent role in advising the association on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and Audit matters, as part of the governance arrangements that operate within AILG.

Audit Committee Members 2019 - 2024

- AILG President
- Cllr. John Pender (Incoming member/Chair)
- Cllr. Christy Hyland
- Cllr. Kevin Murphy (Incoming member)
- Cllr. Jason Murphy
- Cllr. Aisling Moran
(term of office ended September 2022)
- Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick
(term of office ended September 2022)

Compliance and Accounting

The Association maintains the highest standards in Compliance, Accounts, Internal Controls & Corporate Governance.

The AILG engages a professional external firm of accountants who complete the Association's Financial Accounts which are subsequently audited by the Local Government Auditor.

Governance, Responsibilities and Structures

AILG Organisational Development

In 2021-22, AILG continued to carry out a detailed review of the Association to plan strategically for the long-term future, work and role of the organisation. A Working Group was put in place by the President early in the year to oversee two strands of work which would see AILG carry out a full review of its current constitution and continue its organisational development.

The Working group comprises of the AILG Officer Board, Cllr. David Maxwell, Cllr. John Paul Feeley, Cllr. Conor McGuinness and is chaired by Cllr. Anne Colgan. Over the course of six months, the Working group scrutinised the current constitution, line by line, and began drafting a new document. The association's goals and responsibilities were redefined and enhanced, and improvements were introduced to address important areas including gender balance, governance, and the Irish language.

The Working Group engaged with each party group and consulted with party group leaders throughout the review process to ensure consensus on proposed changes. Following months of work and preparation, a new proposed draft of the AILG constitution was circulated to party group leaders and Plenary delegates for discussion and examination.

The Plenary body approved the new constitution at their meeting on 14 July 2022, which will come into effect in June 2024.

In addition to reviewing the constitution, the Working group also reviewed key business processes and set about the task of progressing key strategies relating to Training and Development, Policy, and Communications. A staffing review was carried out in conjunction with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) to identify staffing requirements needed to achieve the goals and objectives of AILG over the coming years. The results of this review are expected in early 2023.

Our Year of 2021 - 2022 at a glance



Launched our first third-level training partnership with the University College Cork



Commenced AILG-Maynooth University Research Project - "The 21st Century Councillor in Irish Local Government" - over 500 responses received



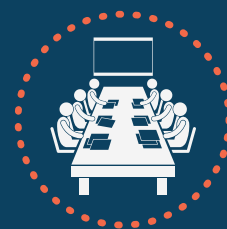
Partnered with Zoom to Launch National Survey Findings on the "Role of Video Conferencing in Local Government"



We launched five additional Information leaflets for Elected Members



Approved a new AILG Constitution



Hosted Bureau of Congress Meeting to mark the Irish Presidency of the Council of Europe



Proudly provided Secretariat for WoMeN's Regional Caucus across the midlands and west in partnership with See Her Elected



Made numerous submissions as part of our policy work covering areas including Governance, Maternity Leave for Councillors, Planning, PPN's and Municipal District/Area Committees and Climate Action



Numerous delegations & consistent dialogue with Ministers, Opposition Party Leaders, Party spokespersons, TDs & Senators to advocate and ensure the delivery of financial and non-financial supports to ease workload of our members

Our Vision

The AILG aims to ensure that the contribution of Ireland's democratically elected councillors is appreciated in Government Departments and throughout the full range of public agencies.

Our Mission

The AILG is a national representative body that proudly represents and supports local democracy. We the elected councillors provide a strong voice for local communities through effective local government.

Goals of the Association



Advocate

- Protect and support democratic local government
- Lobby for improved supports for local authority elected members
- Achieve greater influence for local government and our member local authorities



Support

- Provide training, resources and support to councillors to meet their legislated responsibilities
- Provide general help, advice and guidance to elected members on aspects of local government law, powers and responsibilities of elected members



Promote

- Promote democratic leadership of our elected councillors and our elected Councils
- To put the councillors voice to the forefront of local government
- Facilitate continuous improvement for local government
- Build the profile and enhance the status and reputation of the elected member

1.1 Non-financial supports to ease Workload of Members

As the world slowly began to return to normal proceedings following two years of living through the COVID-19 pandemic, AILG continued its active lobbying campaign for better terms and conditions on behalf of our members. Following the successful outcome of the review of our member's remuneration in 2021, the Association welcomed the opportunity to focus on other issues of local government concern including AILG's continued engagement and participation to deliver the non-pay recommendations identified in the Moorhead report.

AILG resumed its participation in the three sub-working groups formed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage as part of the Action Plan to deliver the non-pay recommendations set out in the Moorhead Report. The three working groups focus on the following key themes; Training and Education, Governance and Communications and will remain in place until 2024.

2023 will see a number of key projects emerging from these subgroups to support the development and education of our members, and promote awareness of the role of local government in general, including a separate communications campaign highlighting the valuable role and contribution of the councillor.

New Vouched Allowances and Gratuities/Pension provisions for Members

Significant changes were also introduced in the form of the Local Representational Allowance (LRA) for elected members which came into effect on 1st January 2022. In late December, AILG published an easy-to-read explanatory note, including best practice guidance and sample templates for all

elected members in relation to the operation of the new allowances regime. The Association also proactively engaged with Department Officials and sought clarifications on some areas following extensive consultation with its membership. The AILG also made numerous representations to Ministers in the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and to the Revenue Commissioner that the SPC Chair allowance become taxable no earlier than the 2024 Local Elections.

Following the long-awaited increase to our member's pay in line with the recommendation from the Moorhead Report, it was identified by AILG that the salary uplift did not transfer across to an enhanced gratuity calculation. At its meeting with Minister Burke on 22 February 2022, the Association reiterated that it was the expectation of our members that the calculation of the gratuity payment would be based on remuneration at time of retirement rather than the previous representational payment figure.

Over a number of months Cllr. Nicholas Crossan and members of the 2021-22 Executive implemented a number of key actions to progress this issue. The Association sought professional legal advice pertaining to the matter and obtained a legal opinion from a Barrister specialising in Employment Law. The President and Officers have maintained a consistent dialogue with all Ministers in the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to the issue and AILG will be continuing its engagement with the Minister on the gratuity question as a priority and hope to bring this to a satisfactory conclusion in early 2023.

The establishment of an interdepartmental committee to consider retirement provision for councillors post 2024 is due to commence shortly and AILG will carry out extensive consultation with our members to feed into this working group.

1.2 Greater Participation, Retention & Diversity in Local Government

AILG Provide Secretariat for WoMeN'S Regional Caucus

Following a successful joint funding application, AILG & SHE were allocated funding of €5,000 by Minister Burke, T.D., in June 2021 to establish a Midlands, Northern & Western (MNW) Regional Women's Caucus in counties Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Galway County, Galway City, Roscommon, Cavan, Monaghan, Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly.

The councillors from the caucus region first met on 1st September 2021 and agreed to form a caucus. Their inaugural meeting was held on 29th September 2021 and a constitution, as well as roles and responsibilities, were agreed. Once procedural and operational matters were agreed upon, the caucus moved to design its Programme of Work.

The working group then got together online over a number of meetings to discuss how best to progress the caucus and to discuss potential items for the programme of work. The Working Group brought those ideas and proposals to the wider membership at an online plenary meeting. As part of trialling a new flexible way of working better suited the needs of women councillors, recap online briefings and online polls were held to include those who couldn't attend meetings.

The Caucus Programme of work was then formally approved at the Caucus's first in-person meeting in June of this year. On Tuesday 22nd November, members of the WoMeN's Regional Caucus, led by Chair Cllr. Carmel Brady, met with members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Leinster House to discuss their work programme & areas of

common interest. Following a general discussion on the projects and working conditions for female politicians at all levels of government, both caucuses identified a number of areas where they could collaborate and offer support.

The accomplishments of the caucus to date are attributable to the commitment of the councillors, an experienced secretariat provided from the resources of AILG and SHE, and a professional facilitator to manage efficient and well-thought-through decision-making. The facilitator's role also includes reporting on the learning from the establishment and progress of the country's first regional caucus and will be a valuable addition to the Department's knowledge of this important new political institution within Irish local government.

Launch of Family Friendly Toolkit to support family friendly policies in Local Government

In September 2022 the National Women's Council of Ireland launched a family friendly toolkit for local authorities on how to encourage women into local government and to support councillors with family and caring commitments. Former AILG President Cllr. Mary Hoade was part of the Steering group who met online to provide expertise and advice to NWCI on the research methodology which informed the development of the toolkit to ensure its relevance and practicality for elected members.

Recommendations from the toolkit included providing a comprehensive induction to councillors when they are first elected or co-opted and providing a dedicated point of contact or Account Manager for councillors as part of its Customer Service Team.



Above: L-R: Cllr. Fintan Brett, Minister Peter Burke TD, Cllr. Nicholas Crossan AILG President 2021/2022 Cllr. Mary Hoade, AILG President 2020/2021 and Cllr. Nick Killian, AILG VP 2021-22 pictured following a meeting in Custom House in February 2022.



Left: 2021-2022 President Cllr. Crossan and VP Cllr. Killian pictured with Minister Peter Burke and Gary McGuinn, Assistant Principal Officer, DHLGH, during a meeting in August 2022.

Maternity Leave Provisions for Members

In July 2022 AILG welcomed the announcement by Minister Peter Burke TD of Cabinet approval to draft a general scheme to grant an entitlement of maternity leave to councillors. The scheme offers the choice to appoint an individual as a temporary substitute in the place a councillor who takes a period of maternity-related absence or is absent due to illness. Elected Members will also have the option to avail of administrative support to assist them in their maternity time to give them extra time to care for their infant if they so wish and choose to keep working in the council chamber with their representative role.

The lack of proper maternity leave has long been cited by AILG as a barrier to women entering politics and the announcement is a significant

advancement and support for women councillors. In September 2022 the AILG made a submission to the Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage on pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Local Government (Maternity Protection and Other Measures for Local Authority Elected Members) Bill 2022.

The Association made clear in our submission that AILG would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the work of the committee and are available to appear before the Joint Committee in relation to this important bill for our members.



Above: Cllr. Mary Hoade (AILG President 2020-21) in attendance at the launch of the National Women's Council Family Friendly Toolkit in Custom House on 14 September 2022.

Right: Chair of Women's Parliamentary Caucus Senator Fiona O' Loughlin chairing the afternoon session on Equality, Inclusion and Diversity at AILG's Autumn Seminar in October 2022.



Right: Members of the WoMeN's Regional Caucus pictured at their first in-person meeting in Sligo Park Hotel on 1st June 2022.



Left: Cllr. Anne Colgan, member of the Irish Delegation to the Congress delivering a speech during its 43rd Congress Session in October 2022.



Above: Members of the WoMeN's Regional Caucus pictured with members of the Parliamentary Women's Caucus during their meeting on 22 November 2022 in Leinster House.



Left: Chair of the WoMeN's Regional Caucus Cllr. Carmel Brady speaking during a meeting with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in November 2022.

2

AILG Policy Programme

"The objective of AILG policy development is to see the Association of Irish Local Government become an influential participant in the formulation of policy relating to local government in Ireland. "

The AILG monitors the output of the Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and other government departments and State agencies to identify proposals in terms of policy and draft legislation which would enhance or circumscribe the powers of councillors. The association's policy agenda is informed by the Programme for Government agreed in summer 2020 and the Government's announcement of legislative priorities at the beginning of each Dáil session.

In addition, the Association listens to the input and feedback from councillors received through its committee structures and from its engagement with councillors on a wider basis through its online and in-person training. The AILG subjects new draft legislation published by Government to scrutiny so as to assess any implications for the powers of elected members and local government.



Taoiseach Micheál Martin pictured with Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, AILG President 2022-2023 during a meeting on 12 October 2022



AILG Plenary delegates participate in round table discussions during their 2022 November Plenary meeting in Lawlors Hotel in Naas, Co. Kildare

2. AILG Policy & Advocacy Programme

Higher Education Bill

The AILG engaged with the progress of the Higher Education Bill from its inception including the commissioning of an independent expert report, conducted by Dr. Bríd Quinn, B.Ed (NUI), MA & PhD (Limerick), which was submitted to the Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science as part of their pre-legislative scrutiny of the bill in April 2021. This was followed up with an appearance before the committee in July 2021.

The Association renewed its lobbying efforts on this issue in 2022 with TDs and Senators and fought to ensure that councillors remained on governing authorities. The association's case was principally that having councillors on the Governing Bodies ensured that the public interest was represented in the State's higher educational and training colleges. Regretfully, no significant support was received to guarantee the inclusion of city or county councillors on Higher Education Authorities. Currently there are 19 councillors on Boards in Educational Institutions across the country but Councils will now no longer be in a position to make nominations to fill these appointments to HEA's.

It is a further erosion of powers and functions of councillors and local government and this comes as a great disappointment to AILG particularly given the long service councillors have given to the sector and the detailed paper and campaign led by successive AILG Presidents and Executives.

DHLGH Planning Forum Group and AILG Input

Following a commitment under the Government's national plan for housing, The Minister of State for Planning and Local Government, Peter Burke TD, established the Planning Advisory Forum in late November 2021. The Forum's primary aim is to advise the Minister on the evolving policy and legal agenda relating to planning matters and met on a regular basis over the course of the year to exchange views on evolving policy, draft planning guidance and to discuss the planning legislative agenda.

Following the appointment of Vice-President at the time, Cllr Nick Killian, to the advisory forum, and to facilitate his input to Planning Advisory Forum, the Association established an informal working group and consultation process with members. This was done by way of round table discussion at the Plenary Meeting of the Association in late December 2021.

Of particular concern to the Association was a recommendation that the CDP takes place every 10 years instead of every five. The AILG engaged with the Minister and Chair of the Forum Minister Peter Burke to highlight the association's concern in this regard. At the time of print, the Attorney General's Office and Department are working intensely to finalise the Draft Planning and Development Bill, with the intention that this will go to Government before Christmas. A Planning Advisory Forum meeting is planned early in the new year which will run through the key policy highlights in the new Bill.



Minister for Planning and Local Government, Peter Burke TD, welcoming representatives to the Planning Advisory Forum Meeting in December 2021



Bottom left: Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, AILG President 2022-23 welcoming guests to the NOAC Good Practice Seminar held on 25 October 2022 in Kilkenny Castle.



Bottom Right: Cllr. Eamon Aylward pictured with Emer Costello, IDEA Manager at the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) Conference in Dublin Castle on 3 November 2022.

2.2 DHLGH Review of Municipal District/Area Committee Structures

As a way of addressing a commitment in the Programme For Government, in 2021 Minister Peter Burke undertook a review of Putting People First - Action Programme for Effective Local Government (2012) which includes considering the provision of best practice recommendations on the operation of Municipal Districts and Area Committees.

In May & June 2021 Minister Burke issued a survey to all elected members to gauge their opinion on the current operation of municipal districts and area committees. The survey results were published in December 2021 and this was followed up with a workshop with Elected Members on 26th January 2022. The Association also held a roundtable workshop session in January with 70+ of our councillor delegate body on the municipal districts and area committees' structures.

Mandate and Money were identified as two of the biggest issues by elected members in relation to the workings of the Municipal Districts with members citing lack of finance and meaningful budget at MD level as areas which could be improved. Similarly, Area Committees were identified by councillors as a good forum for discussion on local issues but highlighted that they are too large and lack both a budget and a chairperson's allowance. Following the department workshop session on the 26th January last, it was agreed that the Department would continue to engage with elected members through AILG as they continued their review of the Municipal District & Area Committee structures throughout 2022.

The Association had a follow-up meeting with the DHLGH in April 2022 during which AILG channeled the feedback received from our delegates at the January workshop session.

The AILG prepared a number of papers to submit and engage with the Department as part of the review. The Association highlighted the main themes arising from the consultation with its members including concerns around Town Teams. The AILG voiced the importance of having councillor representation on Town Teams and proposed that all councillors within the Town Area should be on the Town Teams Committee.

AILG voices Councillor's feedback on PPN Structural Review

In October 2022 an AILG delegation led by President Cllr. Crossan met online with officials from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) to discuss the Public Participation Network (PPN) structural review.

During the meeting the AILG delegation highlighted key findings from a consultation workshop carried out at the Association's October Plenary meeting. These included the significant lack of awareness of PPN's amongst elected members (in particular newly elected councillors since 2019) in relation to the role, remit and work of their local PPN and the current lack of connection/engagement between elected members and PPN which can lead to conflict between councillors and PPNs.

Other significant issues raised by AILG included the fact that local interaction with PPNs only takes place with elected members sitting on LCDCs or at SPC level and the fact that many councillors were unaware of the Memorandum of Understanding between their local authority and their local PPN.

The Association stressed the need for more engagement between the PPN structures and elected members and the need to foster better relations. The Department thanked AILG and the members for their honesty in relation to the issue and acknowledged the importance of keeping an open line of communication with the association going forward. Following the publication of the report in July, a PPN Implementation Roadmap Working Group was established which the Association will continue to channel the feedback and voice of the elected member through its Working Group nominee, Cllr. Charlie Farrelly.

A successful outcome of the engagement with the Department to date was the agreement to have bi-annual meetings and the DCRD welcomed the opportunity to partner with AILG to undertake a programme of training and awareness of the PPNs and DRCD community funding streams with elected members in the new year.

Submission to the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee on accountability and transparency of Local Authorities

In July 2022 the AILG submitted a paper to the Members of the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee on Governance, Oversight and Accountability of Local Authorities. The submission dealt with a number of key issues including;

- The significant increase in briefing documentation as a direct result of the increased powers and functions that members now have responsibility for.
- Training and development of elected members around areas such as the local authority budget process
- The volume of technical documents and information that our members must be familiar with on an ongoing basis.

AILG and the Department have identified the potential for further capacity building which needs to be undertaken to build understanding of the critical governance and oversight role of our members, including capacity building around the full suite of reserved powers and statutory functions at the disposal of our elected members. AILG will continue to assist in programmes for further capacity building of elected members in their oversight, governance and compliance role.

AILG appearance before the Joint Committee on Environment and Climate Action

On 31 May 2022 AILG appeared before the Joint Committee on Environment and Climate Action to contribute to their work and to discuss both the challenges and opportunities for local authorities in climate action. The Association highlighted the challenges local authorities particularly around resources, noting that over the last 10-15 years local authorities have seen a reduction on staff numbers. President at the time, Cllr. Nicholas Crossan noted that if the targets on climate action set by the government are to be delivered at local government level, local authorities would need much needed additional resources.

The Association concluded its contribution by asserting that in order to ensure that the local government sector plays its part in achieving the 51% reduction in gas emissions by 2030 it is essential that we build the capacity of local authorities to lead locally and engage citizens and communities on climate change and biodiversity.

Department Review of Strategic Policy Committees

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is currently undertaking a review of Strategic Policy Committees which were introduced as part of local government reform and to broaden involvement in local government through participation by community and sectoral interests.

The aim of the review is to examine how well the SPCs are achieving their stated purpose; to identify facets of their structure, organisation and operation that are impacting on the effectiveness of the SPCs and to make recommendations. As part of the review a stakeholder working group was established in September 2022 and Cllr. Anne

Colgan and Cllr. Nick Killian were appointed as AILG representatives by the Association. The review is in its infancy stage and AILG has already begun consultation work with its members via the vehicle of the Plenary body, carrying out a round table discussion with delegates at its November meeting.

Over the course of 12 months, the AILG Executive and President also worked on other important policy issues including;

- JPC's & Local Policing Forums
- Housing issues – Social Housing Provision, Tenant Purchase Scheme, Social Housing Income Thresholds
- Town Centre First and Town Teams
- Local Government Finance & Resources/LPT/Budgetary Process
- Local Property Tax and incoming changes to Equalisation Fund



Left: Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, AILG President 2021-22 delivers opening address to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action on 31 May 2022.

Research and policy: Partnership with Maynooth University

In 2021 the AILG entered a two-year Strategic Partnership with Maynooth University (MU) and its International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) as part of our strategic goal to advance AILG's Professional Policy, Research and Advocacy Programme.

An agreed project as part of the strategic partnership was an independent research study on "The 21st Century Councillor in Irish Local Government" which would be undertaken by Maynooth University, with support and collaboration from AILG. A key purpose of the research was to look at the many other facets of the councillor role such as civic leadership, community representational role etc as well as the challenges facing the councillor in an ever-changing landscape & the evolution of the role over the past decade.

The rollout of the research had two strands; a national online survey (quantitative) and one-to-one in-depth interviews/focus groups (qualitative) with a cross-section of councillors (members who are aged under 30, first-time councillors, women councillors, members from ethnic minority groups etc, ensuring that there was an even geographical spread). Following the launch of the national survey at AILG's Annual Conference in March 2022, the Association engaged in a vigorous promotional campaign with our membership in order to meet our target response rate. With the support of the Executive Committee and Plenary delegates, the Association surpassed the response rate target receiving over 500 responses from councillors across the State.

The Maynooth Research Team also presented to the Regional Assemblies at their member meetings to highlight the research to them and to encourage them to self-nominate for interviews as part of the qualitative research. The qualitative research would include a total of 60 interviews and 3 focus groups of approx. 7-8 people which gave a representative population of about 1/9 of the total membership, providing a rich evidence base to draw from.

A Steering group committee was also formed which included five external nominees to ensure and protect the independence of the research;

- DHLGH: Diarmuid O'Leary (Principal Officer)
- Managerial, Political and Academic Specialists: Séamus Neely (former CEO of Donegal County Council); Noel Dempsey (former TD and Minister for the Environment); Dr Bríd Quinn (formerly UL; currently a member of the Group of Independent Experts of the CLRAE); Dr. Bernie O'Donoghue Hynes (Head of Research, LGMA)

The Maynooth Research Team will present an initial summary of key findings from fieldwork to the Steering group committee in December 2022 with an extensive communications campaign and launch of the findings planned for 2023.

Engagement with stakeholders in the Local Government context

Engagement with Northern Ireland colleagues

On 3 March 2022 the Association met with senior committee members from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) in the city of Newry. NILGA made a series of presentations to AILG on current issues in Northern Ireland Local Government and also gave an overview of their “Councils Make it Happen” Campaign which highlighted Council responsibilities and how to use community-based services to support economic growth.

AILG then made a series of presentations to NILGA members detailing the structures and functions of local government in the Republic of Ireland, the Directly Elected Mayor with Executive Functions in Limerick City and County Bill and results of the AILG-CMG survey highlighting the issue of harassment and intimidation faced by elected councillors during the course of their work. Both sides noted that there were a lot of similarities between the two local government systems and shared information on planning, housing, discretionary funding, policy committees, local economic development and councillor supports.

Following informal discussions between President Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick and NILGA President Cllr. Martin Kearney at the National Association of Councillor's AGM in October 2022, both organisations are currently laying the groundwork to collaborate on further dialogue in 2023.

"An ongoing project of AILG is to engage with other like-minded organisations with a particular focus to foster relations and co-operation with government and amongst member councils on an All-Ireland basis"

AILG President attends Northern Ireland Region of the National Association of Councillor's AGM

AILG President Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick was among those in attendance at the Northern Ireland Region Annual General Meeting which took place on Friday 21 October 2022 at the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown Co. Tyrone.

During his attendance at the conference, the President highlighted the importance of cross border relations and noted it was great to engage and build upon the good working relationship that has been established with our sister association chaired by Cllr. Terry Andrews. Cllr. Fitzpatrick also re-connected with members of the Local Authority Members Association (LAMA) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) who were also in attendance.

President of AILG co-signs historic Sister City Partnership Agreement with the US

A historic moment took place on Sunday 17 July 2022, at the Partnership Agreement Signing Ceremony during the launch of the Irish Local Authority & US State Legislature Sister City Programme at the Mansion House, Dublin.

President of AILG, Cllr. Nicholas Crossan joined Senator Mark Daly, representatives from the American Irish State Legislators Caucus (AISLC), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSLorg) and Local Authority Member's Association (LAMA) in signing the partnership agreement which will encourage more strong links between Irish and American local government.

The importance of this new sister partnership between Irish Local Authorities and the US State Legislature has never been more timely, particularly considering the ongoing threat of the Good Friday Agreement due to Brexit. Attendees at the ceremony included a delegation of over 55 politicians from across the United States, including State Senate Presidents and/or majority leaders along with Mayors and Cathaoirigh from across Ireland who pledged their commitment to build upon the deep roots of the Irish American friendship. Ireland will be only the 4th country with whom the National Conference of State Legislators signed an international partnership agreement.



Attendees at the Sister City Partnership Agreement ceremony which included a delegation of over 55 politicians from across the United States along with Mayors & Cathaoirigh from across Ireland.

to try and focus on the positive and exciting opportunities that will come from addressing climate change which can deliver more sustainable communities, homes, new opportunities for jobs and enhanced skills for the future green economy.

AILG Engagement with NOAC and Local Government Governance, Efficiency & Reform Working Group

On 12 October 2022 newly elected AILG President Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick had a meeting with the Local Government Governance, Efficiency & Reform Working Group of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC). The Association discussed local government issues as well as briefing Chair Brian Cawley and Local Government Governance, Efficiency & Reform NOAC Working Group members on the training & work of AILG.

Following this engagement, AILG President Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick delivered an opening address at the NOAC Good Practice Seminar on Tuesday 25th October which highlighted exciting innovation happening in local authorities across the State. Contributions during the event included the innovative approach adopted by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council to respond to the Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis (Ballyogan temporary rest centre); a communications app developed by Leitrim County Council which streamlines communications between Leitrim County Council, Emergency Services, An Garda Síochána, and community alert groups, and how Dublin City Council is exploring ways that drone technology can enhance and support operations for local authorities.

Other keynote addresses were delivered on the day by Minister Malcolm Noonan T.D. Minister of State for Heritage, NOAC Chair Michael McCarthy, and CCMA Chair Frank Curran.

AILG meets Irish Council for Social Housing September 2022

Approved Housing Bodies have become significant providers of housing. Some of the AHBs are well known names such as Clúid, the McVerry Trust, Respond and other large scale operations. Others are quite small specializing in the housing needs of, for example, the elderly or those with special needs in a local community. Housing associations generally work closely with the local authority but such communication may not extend to the local councillors who are the people most aware of the housing needs in a locality. With a view to opening a channel of communications with the housing associations, Cllr Nick Killian (Vice President, 2021/22) proposed that the AILG should initiate a meeting with the representative Association for the AHBs – the Irish Council for Social Housing.

An invitation to the Irish Council for Social Housing was readily accepted and on 22 September 2022, Ms Lyndsey Anderson, Housing Development Specialist, and Ms Ailbhe McLoughlin, Director of Policy met with an AILG delegation headed by Cllr Nicholas Crossan, President (2021/22) and Cllr Killian. The ICSH representatives presented an informative overview of the scale of operation of the AHBs together with examples of where they had worked closely with the local authority. There followed a discussion where councillors reiterated

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AILG Policy Programme

the need for the elected members to be fully briefed about forthcoming AHB schemes in the counties across the country. The importance of training for elected members was also discussed and it was felt ICSH could contribute to councillor training programmes in the area of housing. The meeting concluded with agreement that both organisations would maintain contact where issues of mutual interest arose.

AILG Meeting with Department of Transport and Speed Limits Review Group

In early November 2022, an AILG delegation led by President Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick met with Officials from the Department of Transport and representatives of the Speed Limits Review Group to discuss the work of the group and the state of speeding policy in Ireland. Elected Members have a well-informed knowledge of driving patterns throughout the country with their local knowledge being well

attuned to both public acceptability of, and also, on occasion, public resistance to road safety measures. During the meeting both sides discussed the question of speed limits and current issues. The Association asserted the fact that councillors must retain their reserved function for setting Special Limits with some streamlining of the process. Members of the AILG delegation also provided the councillor's experience of what communities want in regard to speed limits and an agreement was made between both sides to reduce the default limit on local roads to 60km/h.



Left: 2021-22 AILG Executive delegation meet with Ms Lyndsey Anderson and Ms Ailbhe McLoughlin from the Irish Council for Social Housing on 22 September 2022.

Engagement with stakeholders in the Local Government context

AILG President and Vice President attend National Commemoration of War Event

On the 10th July, AILG President Cllr. Crossan and Vice President Cllr. Nick Killian joined the President of Ireland, the Taoiseach and Cathaoirleach and Mayors across the country in remembering Irishmen and Irishwomen who died in past wars or on service with the United Nations. The event occurs annually on the Sunday nearest 11 July - the anniversary of the date in 1921 when a truce was signed ending the Irish War of Independence.

The President is also an ex officio member of the **Bravery Awards Council** chaired by the Ceann Comhairle. The Council meets bi-annually to decide and award recognition for acts of civilian bravery based on reports verified by An Garda Síochana or the Irish Coast Guard.

AILG President gives opening address at Climate Action Economic and Opportunities Conference

AILG President Cllr. Crossan addressed attendees at the Climate Action and Economic Opportunities – Local Authorities supporting Enterprise Conference which took place over two days on the 12th and 13th of October 2021. The virtual conference focused on looking at climate change through the lens of opportunity, and outlined the pivotal role that elected members and their local authorities can play in the transition to a climate neutral economy. During his opening address President Cllr. Crossan noted that while the journey of transition for local communities was not going to be easy, it was important for councillors as community champions

to try and focus on the positive and exciting opportunities that will come from addressing climate change which can deliver more sustainable communities, homes, new opportunities for jobs and enhanced skills for the future green economy.

External Committees

The AILG is represented on a small number of external bodies, principally:

- University College Dublin Governing Body
- National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Congress of Local & Regional Authorities – Council of Europe

City and County Management Association

The AILG meets with the CCMA - the body representing the City and County Chief Executives on an annual basis. In December 2021 the Association met with the then CCMA Chair Mr Brendan McGrath, Galway City CE who was accompanied by Mr Owen Keegan, Dublin City Council CE. Issues discussed included: the new expenses system for councillors and the administrative burden on corporate services staff and getting unity across local authorities; Limerick Directly Elected Mayor; the passing of the Planning and Development Large Scale Residential Bill; the AILG-UCC Climate Learning Program and establishment of the Planning Advisory Forum.

A discussion also took place in relation to the return to online and hybrid meetings, with the CCMA highlighting large costs for local authorities in relation to equipment.



Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, AILG President 2022/2023 pictured members of the Local Government Governance, Efficiency & Reform Working Group of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) on 12 October 2022



Above: *Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, AILG President 2022/2023 pictured with NAC Chair, Cllr. Terry Andrews at the Northern Ireland Region Annual General Conference.*





Above: AILG Executive 2021-22, pictured with local government colleagues from NILGA during a meeting between both organisations on 3 March 2022 in Newry, Northern Ireland.



Left: Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick pictured with NOAC Chair Michael McCarthy and Minister Malcolm Noonan, Minister of State for Heritage & Electoral Reform at NOAC Good Practice Seminar on 25 October 2022.



Right: Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, AILG President 2022/2023 pictured with Ceann Comhairle Seán Ó Fearghail at the Bravery Awards Ceremony in Farmleigh House on 18 November 2022.

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AILG Training & Education

The AILG's "Elected Members Training Programme" delivers appropriate training across a wide range of local authority functions and related activities. Our training programme is delivered on a regional basis in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government with speakers being made available from across various government departments, agencies and local authorities.

"One of the key functions of the AILG is to ensure that elected members receive appropriate and relevant training and development as they govern Irish local authorities currently and into the future."



Above: Cllr. Jimmy Moloney, Head of the Irish CLRAE delegation delivering a presentation on AILG participation at the Council of Europe at our Autumn Seminar in October 2022.



Left: Cllr. Guss O'Connell, South Dublin County Council, participating in Q&A discussion at AILG's Autumn Seminar in 2022.

AILG "In Person" Elected Member Training Programme Analysis 2022



Module	Date	Subject	Speakers
Module 1	Feb 2022	<i>Elected Member's Personal Safety and Risk Assessment</i>	Brian Cremin, Managing partner of Crime Management Group
Module 2	May 2022	<i>Climate Action – the Role of Local Government</i>	Emer Costello, IDEA and Nick Doran, Saolta Ciaran Rabbitt, Team Lead in Future Networks and Tómas Bradley, Senior Lead Planner (Eirgrid)
Module 3	June 2022	<i>Finalising your development plan – key steps and requirements from the Development Plan Guidelines</i>	Pauline Riordan, Planning Adviser, National, Regional and Urban Planning, DHLGH Niall Cussen, Planning Regulator, OPR
Module 4	July 2022	<i>Local Authority Audit Committees and the Governance and Oversight Role of Elected Members</i>	Martha Kelly & Maurice Murphy, Internal Auditors, Roscommon/Cork Co.Co and Cllrs Anne Colgan & Marie Murphy, Council Audit Committee Members
Module 5	Oct 2022	<i>Disability and Inclusion</i>	Cllr Vicki Casserly and Paul Allen, South Dublin County Council and Bernie Bradley, Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, IHREC
Module 6	Nov 2022	<i>Data Protection - What Councillors Need to Know</i>	Gerry Egan, Governance Consultant and Trainer

AILG "Online" Member Training Analysis 2022

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Speaker</i>
Planning	Feb 2022	<i>Local Authority Planning Functions & Water Services Investment: Ensuring a Co-ordinated Approach</i>	Feargal O'Coigligh, Brian Munnelly and David Flynn, Water Division of the DHLGH John O'Shaughnessy, Irish Water's Planning Lead.
Housing	March 2022	<i>An overview of the 'Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland</i>	Siobhán Nic Thighearnáin, Housing Division, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Housing	May 2022	<i>Housing for All - Pathway 1 and 2</i>	Siobhán Nic Thighearnáin, Housing Division, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Housing	June 2022	<i>Housing for All - Pathway 3 and 4</i>	Siobhán Nic Thighearnáin, Yvonne Dalton, Steven O'Riordan, David Murray, Turlough O'Brien, DHGH Jim Baneham/Claire Feeney, The Housing Agency
Social Media	July 2022	<i>Facebook and Instagram: Safety Tools & Amplifying Your Message</i>	Stephanie Anderson, Public Policy Manager, Ella Fallows, Politics and Government Outreach Lead and Jennifer O' Mahony, META Ireland
Social Media	July 2022	<i>Media and Social Media - How to connect with your audience</i>	Elaine Lynch, AILG Communications Officer
Planning	Sept 2022	<i>Planning that Revitalises Ireland's Towns and Villages</i>	Stewart Logan, Planning Policy Division, DHLGH, Frank Moylan, Senior Planner, Sligo Co. Co & Maire Cullinan, Regeneration Officer, Monaghan Co. Co
Planning	Nov 2022	<i>The Role of Planning in Protecting Ireland's Water Quality</i>	David Flynn and Averil Gannon, Water Advisory Unit, DHLGH, and Jason Taylor and Laura Courtney, Planning Division of the DHLGH
Electoral Reform	Nov 2022	<i>AILG-DHLGH Webinar briefing for Elected Members on the Electoral Reform Act 2022</i>	Petra Woods, Principal Officer, Electoral Registration Modernisation Project, Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



L-R: Cllr. Jack Murray, Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, AILG President 2021-22, Donegal CE John G McLaughlin, Minister Peter Burke, TD, Cllr. Nick Killian at AILG Annual Conference in March 2022



Centre: Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, AILG President 2021-2022 and Cllr. Nick Killian, AILG VP 2021-2022 pictured with their partners Rosemary and Maura at the AILG Annual Conference.



L-R: Kevin Comiskey (IFA), Eunan Quinn, Donegal Co. Co, AILG President 2021-22 Cllr. Nicholas Crossan and Anne Marie Conton, Donegal Co. Co.



Above: Cllr. Nicholas Crossan delivers opening address at AILG Annual Conference on 23 March 2022.



Above: L-R: Cllr. Winston J. Bennett, Cllr. Carmel Brady, Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, AILG President 2021-2022, Cllr. Robert Burgess, NILGA Chair 2021-2022, Cllr. Madeleine Argue pictured at AILG's Annual Conference in Buncrana, Co. Donegal on 24 March 2022.

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AILG Training and Education

AILG "In Service" Member Training Analysis 2022



AILG "In Service" Member Training Analysis 2021 - 2022

2,419

2,419 attendees over 17 Training events (including over 800 online attendees) in 2022

650

The number of councillors who have attended at least one of our online training sessions now stands at 650 elected members or above 69% of our membership

9

The number of online training webinars delivered to our members between Jan 2022 - November 2022



Above: Cllr. Martina Kinane and Cllr. Jimmy McClearn at AILG Module 6 training event in Navan on 26 November 2022.



L-R: Cllr. Frank O' Flynn, Cllr. Terry Shannon and Cllr. Joe Conway in attendance at AILG Annual Conference in Buncrana on 23 and 24 March 2022.



L-R: Cllr. Mary Hoade, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick and Cllr. Rosaleen O' Grady pictured at AILG Autumn Seminar 14 September 2022.



Above: Councillors participating in AILG Module 5 training session on "Disability and Inclusion" on 27 October 2022.



L-R: Cllr. Vicki Casserly, Bernie Bradley (IHREC), Paul Allen, South Dublin Co. Co and AILG Vice President 2022-23 Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick pictured at AILG Module 5 training event in Sligo on 27 October 2022.



L-R: Cllr. Pat Daly, Cllr. Damien Geoghegan, Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, former AILG President Padraig McNally and Cllr. John Crowe pictured at AILG training event in May 2022.



A selection of images of councillor graduates who successfully completed the UCC Climate Learning Program launched in partnership with AILG.





Top L-R: Cllr. David Gilroy, Lecturer Mark Kernan (ACE) Director Tommy Moylan, Samantha O' Sullivan (ACE), Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, President Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Belinda Gascoigne (ACE)



Above: ALLG President Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick delivers opening address to UCC graduates in University College Cork 29 November 2022



L-R: Cllr. Oliver Moran, Cllr. Caralynn Moore, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr. Alastair McKinstry



ALLG President Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick and ALLG Past President Cllr. Nicholas Crossan pictured with graduates from the Climate Learning Program in UCC on 29 November 2022.

AILG Launches Climate Learning Program in partnership with UCC

In December 2021 President Cllr. Crossan launched the QQI Level 7 Certificate in Continuing Professional Development in Climate Crisis and Local Government in partnership with the University College Cork (UCC). The partnership marked another exciting new chapter for the Association which saw AILG achieve our goal of delivering a bespoke externally accredited training programme and brought us closer to developing our AILG Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Education and Training Programme.

A total of 24 elected members undertook and successfully completed the course which aimed to inform, challenge and empower councillors to confidently navigate their increasingly important role in addressing climate change at a local level.

The Association acknowledged the achievements of the students at its Autumn Seminar in October 2022 whereby Minister Peter Burke, Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage made a presentation to the 24 elected councillors from across the country who had completed the course.

On 30 November 2022, the University College Cork also marked the historic occasion by hosting a formal ceremony of completion on their campus. A number of distinguished guests including the Vice President of UCC, Professor Pat McSweeney joined the successful graduates and their families in receiving their certificates. As a representative body, the Association is proud to have co-sponsored the programme and AILG are again delighted to announce that we intend to continue our partnership with UCC in offering this bespoke Level 7 Certificate in Climate Crisis and Local Government to our local authority elected members again in 2023.

AILG-UCC Graduates (Class of 2022)

Cllr. Elaine McGinty - Meath Co. Co
 Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald - Kerry Co. Co
 Cllr. Garret Kelleher - Cork City Council
 Cllr. Oliver Moran - Cork City Council
 Cllr. Gerry O' Connor - Meath Co. Co
 Cllr. Sarah Reilly - Meath Co. Co
 Cllr. Kieran McCarthy - Cork City Council
 Cllr. David Maxwell - Monaghan Co. Co
 Cllr. Caroline Conroy - Dublin City Council
 Cllr. Maria Dollard - Kilkenny Co. Co
 Cllr. Uruemu Adejinmi - Longford Co. Co
 Cllr. Gobnait Moynihan - Cork County Council
 Cllr. Ciara Galvin - Kildare Co. Co
 Cllr. Susan McCarthy - Cork Co. Co
 Cllr. Alastair McKinstry - Galway Co. Co
 Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn - Galway Co. Co
 Cllr. Deirdre O' Brien - Cork Co. Co
 Cllr. Audrey Buckley - Cork Co. Co
 Cllr. Sarah Kiely - Limerick City & County Council
 Cllr. Bridie Collins - Limerick City & County Council
 Cllr. Carolyn Moore - Dublin City Council
 Cllr. Claire Byrne - Dublin City Council
 Cllr. Punam Rane - Fingal Co. Co
 Cllr. Joe Kelly - Waterford City & County Council

3.2 AILG Launches Information Leaflets

In September 2022 **AILG launched a second series of information leaflets** – currently available online – with the intention of giving councillors a quick briefing on issues that feature frequently on their business agendas. An objective of the leaflets is to empower councillors to question and to contribute to processes which have enduring consequences for communities or individuals. The new information leaflets cover the following areas; Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty; The Councillor and the Registration of Lobbying; The Temporary Closing of Roads - Processes and Notices; The Litter Act - Reserved and Operational Functions and Special Speed Limits - A Reserved Function of the Elected Member.

AILG hosts successful Annual Training Conference

More than two years after Covid prompted a shift to remote work and virtual gatherings, the Association was delighted to host its 2022 annual conference in Buncrana, Co. Donegal on the 23 and 24 March earlier this year.

Opened by guest speaker Peter Burke TD, Minister for Local Government, the two-day conference brought together leading local and national experts from the local government sector to discuss various themes which included “Town Centre First – Local Authorities Championing the Local Economic Recovery Post Covid-19”.

The event attracted more than 300 delegates from across the country who greatly benefitted from the insights and contributions of presenters and speakers including Kevin Comiskey from the Irish Farmers Association (IFA), Head of Economic Development Ann Marie Conlon and Senior Planner Eunan Quinn from Donegal County Council. The Association also officially launched its national survey on “The 21st Century Councillor in Local Government” and lead researcher for the project, Geographer, Analyst and Social Researcher Brendan O’ Keefe led an engaging panel discussion on the joint Research Project between AILG and Maynooth University.

Council of Europe in focus at AILG Autumn Seminar

As part of Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of Europe, the AILG devoted its Autumn Training Seminar to reflecting on the 3 main themes of the Irish Presidency: support for democracy and human rights, youth democratic participation, and equality and inclusion. Almost 300 elected representatives and delegates from across the

country came together in Trim, Co. Meath for a packed programme of discussion. The event was officially opened by Minister Peter Burke, Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage who made a presentation to 24 elected councillors from across the country who had recently completed a newly developed UCC accredited course in Climate Action.

Distinguished guest speakers for the first session of the day included Bernd Vohringer, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress in the Council of Europe and Larisa Miculet, Moldovan Ambassador to Ireland who discussed the resilience of local government in responding to geopolitical tensions in Europe. A sobering remote address was also delivered by the Deputy Mayor of Bucha in Ukraine, a town which bore the brunt of the assault in March when Russians attempted to take the capital Kyiv.

Minister Thomas Byrne, Minister for European Affairs, was on hand to close the successful two-day event where he spoke about how local politics and democracy are at the core of the Council of Europe. The Seminar was concluded with a special long service councillor awards presentation during which a number of councillors were recognised for serving their local communities for almost 50 years as public representatives. Those honoured on the night included Cllr. Frank McDermott (Westmeath County Council), Cllr. Mary Hilda Kavanagh (Kilkenny County Council), and Cllr. PJ Kelly from Laois County Council.

Long Service Councillor Awardees;

Cllr. PJ Kelly (Clare County Council)
 Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh (Kilkenny County Council)
 Cllr. Declan Bree (Sligo County Council)
 Cllr. Hugh McElvany (Monaghan County Council)
 Cllr. Frank McDermott (Westmeath County Council)



Above: Leo Galvan - Irish participant at Democracy Action Week in the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, speaking at AILG Autumn Seminar, September 2022



L-R: AILG President 2021-22 Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, Trim Cathaoirleach - Cllr. Joe Fox, AILG Vice President 2021-22 Cllr. Nick Killian, 14 September 2022



Above: Grayson McGill delivering presentation during Session 2 - "Hear Our Voices - Recognising Young People as Community Leaders and Active Citizens"



L-R: AILG Vice President 2021-22 Cllr. Nick Killian pictured with Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



Above: Larisa Miculeț – Moldovan Ambassador to Ireland addresses councillors at AILG Autumn Seminar in Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim on 15 September 2022



Above: Bernd Vöhringer, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress, Council of Europe speaking at AILG Autumn Seminar, 15 September 2022



Above: Cllr. Nicholas Crossan presents Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh with Long Service Award with Minister of State for European Affairs, Minister Thomas Byrne TD at AILG Autumn Seminar 2022.



Minister Damien English TD, Cllr. Nicholas Crossan, and Minister Thomas Byrne pictured with Long Service Award recipient Cllr. Frank McDermott and his wife.

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AILG Communications

"As part of our Communications Plan, we proactively position AILG as the go-to leading voice for local government matters with Government, media and other stakeholders."

Throughout 2021-22 the Association continued to invest resources in our regular communications to keep our members updated on the latest news and events organised by AILG.

Communications - Email Marketing Campaigns

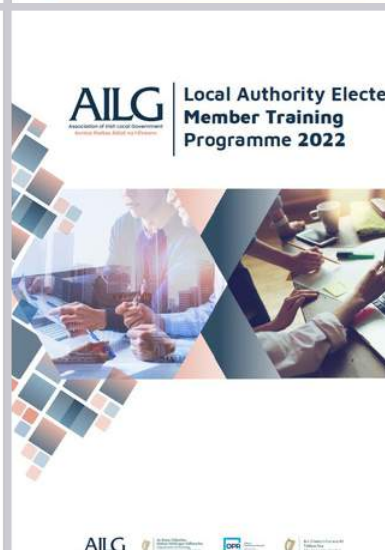
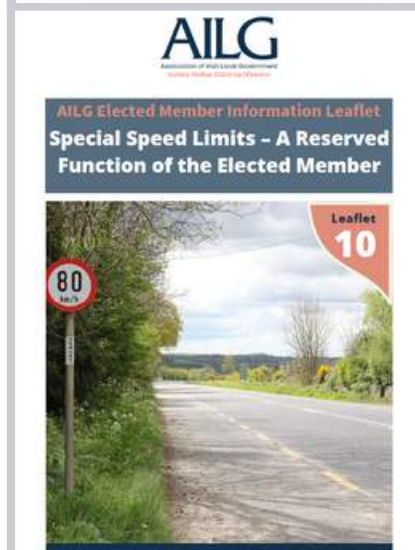
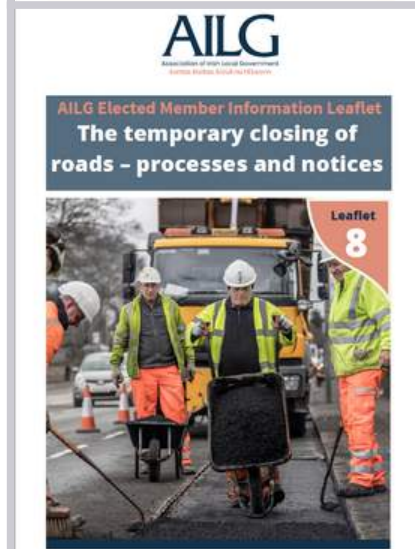
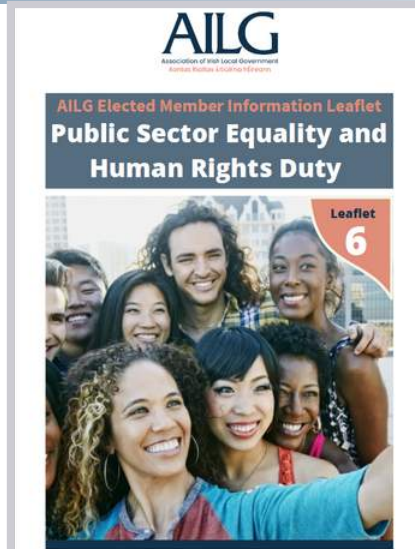
As part of an AILG awareness campaign amongst the wider body of members, a **new AILG Elected Member Weekly Bulletin** for elected members was introduced in February 2022 which has proved hugely successful.

Benchmarking our email marketing engagement from 2022 against last year, the Association has seen a **14%** increase in email engagement from our elected members which is a fantastic achievement.

AILG-Zoom Survey "The Role of Video Conferencing in Local Government" Launch

In November AILG launched a new report 'The Role of Video Conferencing in Supporting Local Government' in collaboration with Zoom.

Informed by a survey of Ireland's 949 elected members, the report outlined how video conferencing supported the continuation of council work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the challenges faced in adapting to an online model and the desire to retain a future hybrid model. A total of 139 complete responses were returned by the closing date representing a 15% response rate. Key findings from the report included;



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AILG Communications

AILG-Zoom Survey “The Role of Video Conferencing in Local Government” Launch

- 77% of respondents believed future statutory council meetings & council related meetings should be conducted as physical meetings with the option to access by video conferencing
- 81% of respondents believe a hybrid environment facilitates better family, personal, work or study balance within their role as an elected representative.
- 51% believe that a hybrid environment will encourage more participation in Local Government from underrepresented groups including women, under 35's, self-employed, full-time carers, and people with a disability.

The survey was well received and AILG received a large volume of media coverage in relation to the survey launch.

Social Media and Website

Sharing our information continues to be supported by our social media strategy, with increased engagement and steady growth across LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook as outlined by the 2022 statistics below. The Association's website which was newly developed in 2020 received over 35K page views and a total of 8,112 visitors to the site in 2022.



Twitter followers
2,060



Website visitors
8,112



Facebook followers
1,450



Email marketing engagement
+14%



LinkedIn followers
586



Weekly Bulletin views
14,387



Instagram followers
500

- date of these statistics is 30 Nov 2022

AILG Congress of Local & Regional Authorities in Europe (C.L.R.A.E)

"The AILG has a small but valued involvement through its role as parent body for the Irish delegation of councillors to the Council of Europe's local government forum – the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE)."

The Congress is the forum of the Council of Europe which brings together elected members from 47 European countries to discuss issues of concern in the local government sector throughout the continent. There is an emphasis on issues to do with the participation of minority groups including migrants in all facets of local democracy and the Irish delegates also take part in meetings of the three major committees of the Congress: Monitoring, Governance and Current Affairs.

AILG contribution to Irish Presidency of the Council of Europe

The 20th of May 2022 marked the beginning of the Irish Presidency of the Council of Europe (COE), its first time to hold such a prestigious mandate in over twenty years. This milestone provided an opportunity for the Irish Delegation of councillors, supported by AILG, to consider ways in which Irish local government could deepen its engagement with the Council of Europe within the framework of existing meetings and activities.

As well as devoting its Autumn Training Seminar to the Council of Europe, the Association carried out a number of activities to mark Ireland's six-month Presidency of the Council of Europe.



L to R: Cllr. Gbnait Moynihan, Gráinne Kelly, Dublin City Council, Cllr. Anne Colgan, CLRAE Delegation Head, Cllr. Jimmy Moloney, Irish Ambassador to the Council of Europe, Lord Mayor of Dublin Cllr. Caroline Conroy, Minister for Planning and Local Government, Peter Burke TD, Senator Fiona O' Loughlin and Mr Breffni O'Reilly, Permanent Ambassador and Representative of Ireland to the Council of Europe.

AILG Congress of Local & Regional Authorities in Europe (C.L.R.A.E)

AILG Host Bureau of Congress Meeting in Partnership with Kerry County Council

To mark the Irish Presidency of the Council of Europe, the Bureau of Congress met in early June in Tralee, County Kerry to discuss a variety of topics and hear from a range of speakers which included Kerry Mayor and Head of the Irish Delegation to Congress Cllr. Jimmy Moloney, AILG President Cllr. Nicholas Crossan and President of the Congress Leen Verbeek.



The Bureau of Congress, also known as the Executive Committee of the Congress of Local & Regional Authorities in Europe is the local government assembly of the overall Council of Europe. Over 27 Local government elected members from Sweden, Germany, Belgium, NL, France, Austria, Georgia, Serbia, Armenia, the UK and, notably, Ukraine, were present at the meeting where Russia's invasion of Ukraine was one of the top issues discussed.

An emotional Ukrainian reunion took place at the beginning of the meeting as Ukrainian families housed by Kerry County Council had the opportunity to speak with congress members and meet with Ukrainian elected member Svitlana Bohatyrchuk Kryvko who delivered a powerful speech to the Congress. During his welcome address to the Congress, Cllr. Crossan offered his full support and solidarity with Ukraine and thanked the Ukrainian families present for sharing their experience. In his concluding remarks, Cllr. Crossan warned that "Putin's Ukraine invasion has been a wake-up call for a world taking democracy for granted."



The Bureau of the Congress pictured on 14 June 2022 in Tralee, Kerry County, where they had an exchange of views with Irish councillors, including members of the Irish delegation to the Congress, on local self-government in Ireland as well as the local dimension of the Irish Committee of Ministers' priorities.

AILG Executive Committee Study Visit to the Council of Europe

In light of the Irish Presidency of the Council of Europe, the AILG National Executive Committee travelled to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg at the end of June 2022. The purpose of the study trip was to engage with the European organisation, which was founded in the wake of World War II to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe.

Over the course of two days, the AILG delegation had a busy schedule of engagements with a number of key personnel including Minister Thomas Byrne, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Judge Siofra O’Leary, President of the European Court of Human Rights

and Mr Breffni O’Reilly, Irish Ambassador to the Council of Europe.

AILG Executive Committee members Cllr. Joe Leddin and Cllr. Gráinne Maguire also met and spoke with youth groups at the Palais de l’Europe as part of a Council of Europe campaign to increase young people’s role in the process of revitalising participatory democracy in the Council of Europe. Across its six-month Presidency term, Ireland pursued three clear and complementary priorities, with the overarching aim of renewing “the conscience of Europe” in the wake of war on our continent. At a time of turmoil, Ireland reaffirmed ‘Our Founding Freedoms’, by refocusing on human rights protection for civilians across Europe, above all through the vital work of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).



L to R: Members of the 2021-2022 AILG National Executive Committee pictured with Minister Thomas Byrne TD and Mr Breffni O’Reilly, Irish Ambassador to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg France in June 2022 as part of their study trip to mark the Irish Presidency of the Council of Europe.



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