

## Awards for Northern Ireland's best performers

Councils across Northern Ireland celebrated best performance as they gathered to hear the results of the Northern Ireland Local Government Awards for 2008.

More than 300 officers and councillors came together at the Armagh City Hotel on 26<sup>th</sup> February to hear the winners of the Northern Ireland Local Government Awards, announced by comic actress Nuala McKeever. All local councils in Northern Ireland were invited to make a submission for the awards highlighting the best services, initiatives, staff and councillors.

Cllr Helen Quigley, President of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) said: *'It is vital that local councils let members of their community know about the quality of the services they are providing – and this event has highlighted many examples of excellent services and projects as well as high calibre individuals dedicated to public service provision'*. She added: *'Every one of the entries deserves to be congratulated but the winners deserve special recognition. I would like to add my personal thanks to all those who took the time to make a submission'*.

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), which promotes excellence in local government across the UK and The MJ, the leading national weekly local government magazine, were among the high profile supporters of the Awards.

APSE's chief executive, Paul O'Brien, said: *'The high standard of submissions reflects the calibre of individuals, services and innovations and a real culture of improvement to be found in local government in Northern Ireland.'*

Heather Jameson, deputy editor of The MJ, said: *'The MJ is delighted to support these awards, which represent local government at its best in serving local communities and councils learning from each other.'*

### **The winners in each category were as follows:**

#### **Best Local Authority Service Team of the Year - Sponsored by APSE**

**Winner** - Magherafelt District Council

Armagh City and District Council – Exercise for Health

Banbridge District Council - Waste minimisation and recycling team

Craigavon Borough Council – Parks Service

Magherafelt District Council – Leisure's inspiration and innovations

#### **Change Champions in Practice - Sponsored by Local Government Staff Commission NI**

**Winner** - Derry City Council

Antrim Borough Council - Fuel Poverty Team

Derry City Council - Self insurance programme

Limavady Borough Council - Celebrating the total value of workplace health and wellbeing

Magherafelt District Council - Felt the need for a venue like this! Meadowbank Sports Arena

### **Innovative HR in Practice - Sponsored by Local Government Staff Commission NI**

**Winner** - Strabane District Council

Armagh City and District Council - Striving for excellence in HR

Belfast City Council - Corporate HR

Newtownabbey Borough Council - Human Resources Section

Strabane District Council - Human Resources Strategy

### **Innovative Training Initiative - Sponsored by Local Government Training Group**

**Winner** - Southern Group Environmental Health Committee

Antrim Borough Council - Learning Week

Newtownabbey Borough Council - Managing in a political environment

Omagh District Council - Women Redress Advancement in the Public Sector

Southern Group Environmental Health Committee - The STEM Project

### **Best Initiative by a Councillor - Sponsored by NILGA**

**Winner** - Cllr. Wilfred McFadden - Banbridge District Council

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Derry City Council - Civic Alcohol Forum

Down District Council – Cllr. Dermot Curran

Magherafelt District Council – Cllrs. Paul McClean, Jim Campbell, Sean McPeake, George Shields and Patsy Groogan - From aircraft to leisure craft

### **NILGA President's Award for Sustainable Development - Sponsored by NILGA**

**Winner** - East Border Region Environmental Website

Craigavon Borough Council - Sustainable Oxford Island

Derry City Council - Active citizenship through sport

East Border Region Environmental Website - SustainandBuild.com

North Down Borough Council – Waste Management Facilities powered by Green Energy

### **Best Joint Initiative between Councils - Sponsored by SOLACE NI**

**Winner** - Newry and Mourne District Council / Louth County Council

Ards Borough Council / North Down Borough Council - Visible Women

Coleraine Borough Council / Ballymoney Borough Council - Wildcats and multi skills clubs

East Border Region Environmental Website - SustainandBuild.com

Newry and Mourne District Council / Louth County Council - Challenge of Change Project

Southern Group Environmental Health Committee - The STEM Project

### **Employee of the Year - Sponsored by William Johnston Memorial Trust**

**Winner** - Wesley Bonar – Newtownabbey Borough Council

Gary Boyd – Ballymena Borough Council

David Neill - Belfast City Council

Wesley Bonar – Newtownabbey Borough Council

#### **Editors' notes:**

- The Northern Ireland Local Government Awards were introduced in 2008 and there were 87 submissions made by local councils across eight award categories.
- The 6 main organisations which support local government in Northern Ireland have come together to establish the awards authorities – APSE, Local Government Staff Commission NI, Local Government Training Group, NILGA, SOLACE NI and William Johnson Memorial Trust. The awards will become a standard fixture in the local government calendar.
- The Northern Ireland Local Government Awards formed part of the high profile NILGA Annual Seminar 'Leading Change – Serving Citizens' which explored issues around the Review of Public Administration, the wider local government agenda and facilitated networking and relationship building to support change
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