

Northern Ireland Local Government Association

Modelling NILGA's Future

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Introduction

- The Team:
 - **Clive Grace**, Associate Consultant, former Deputy Auditor-General for Wales and Director-General of the Audit Commission in Wales, and a former Chief Executive of a Welsh unitary local authority
 - **Olwen Lyner**, Chief Executive Officer, NIACRO
 - **Richard Kemp**, Lead Member Peer (IDeA) & Leader of Liberal Democrat Group (LGA)
 - **Satvinder Rana**, Programme Manager (IDeA)

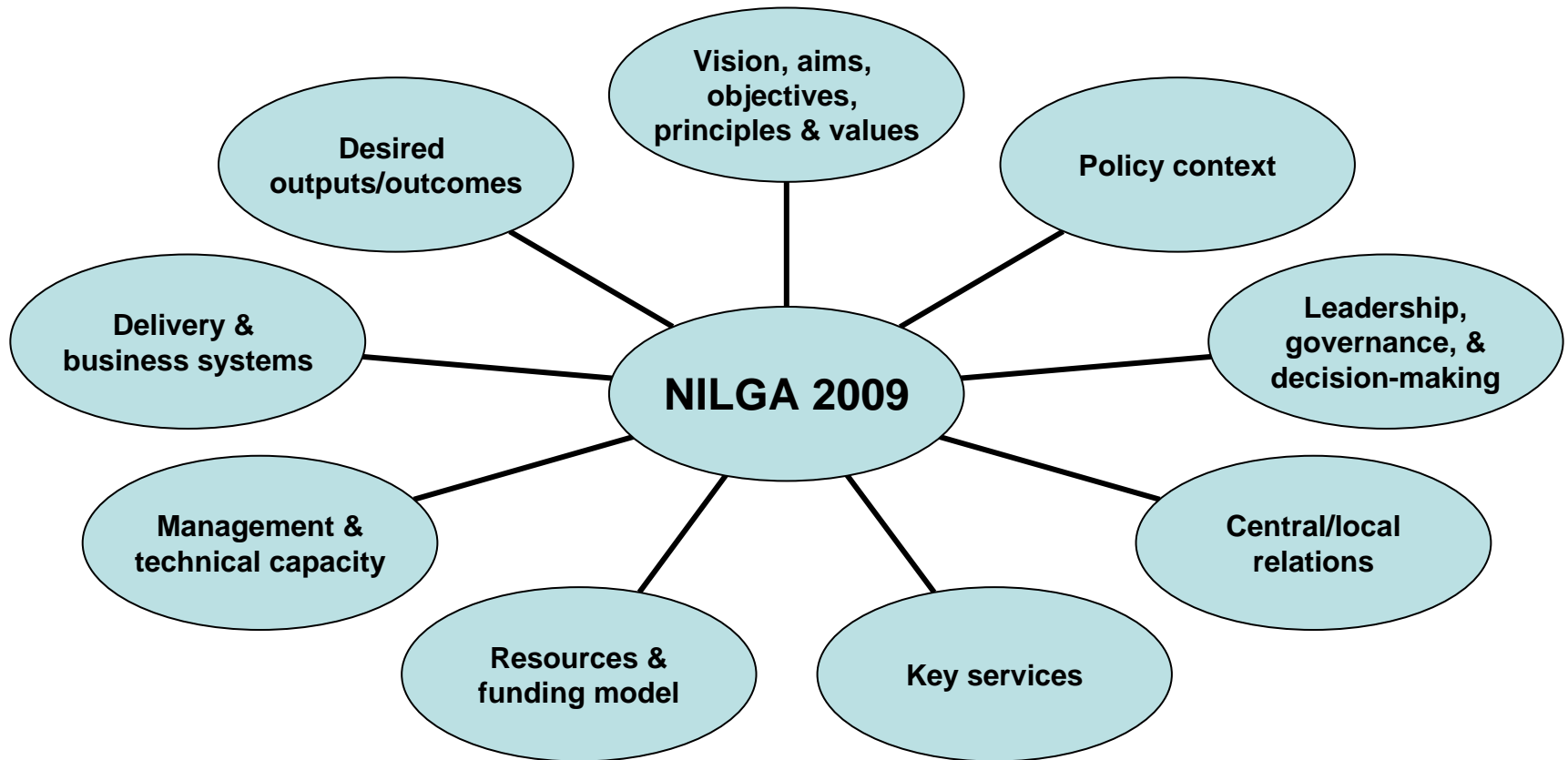
Our Brief

- To design a template for what NILGA might look like post 2009
- To test out the template with a focus group of key stakeholders and refine accordingly
- To test the template with a wider group of stakeholders and assess NILGA's ability and capacity to match it
- To secure stakeholder buy-in to a strengthened NILGA
- To make recommendations to help move NILGA from "as is" to "as should be" position

Our Methodology

- Background research into NILGA, the RPA and modernisation of local government
- Drafted the template outlining key characteristics of an effective NILGA (16th August)
- Tested out the draft template with a focus group of a cross-section of stakeholders (24th August)
- Met with key stakeholders through 1-2-1 meetings and focus group meetings (6th and 8th September)
- Delivered the key messages and sought comments at NILGA AGM (22nd September)
- Discussed main recommendations and their implications with NILGA Executive (3rd October)

NILGA 2009 Template



Our Key Messages

- NILGA has achieved much...but needs to do more and further challenges ahead
- Local government in NI at critical stage in its development
- Opportunities for local government to deliver greater range of services
- A strong, visionary & flexible LGA is a pre-requisite for strengthened local government
- Significant investment needed in NILGA from major stakeholders
- Investments to be made on a mutually contingent basis
- But these investments to be subject to reform of NILGA and conditions

Our Key Messages....Reform and conditions

- NILGA to build trust, confidence and credibility among its important constituent stakeholders
- NILGA's capacity and authority to be radically increased
- Increase in senior officer capacity and policy making capacity urgent
- NILGA's role to be distinct and separate from councils
- NILGA to expand its resource base through a mixed funding model
- NILGA to become even more creative in how it works with others
- Expectations need to be managed through agreed outputs and outcomes

Our Recommendations

For NILGA:

- Modify governance arrangements
 - Efficient and timely decision making by Executive
 - Better relations between NILGA political groups and their political parties
 - Agreed consultation process with NIO
 - Themed Policy Boards with NILGA spokespersons
 - Membership to reflect new councils
- External mentoring support for President, Vice Presidents & Executive
- A new and reconstructed senior officer structure and increased capacity
 - Chief Executive
 - Corporate Director (Local Government Improvement)
 - Corporate Director (Policy & Strategy)
 - Corporate Director (Communications & Engagement)

- Establish policy context for NILGA through a policy debate
- Widen relationships with central government i.e. beyond DoE
- Focus on the following key service areas:
 - Being the voice of local government
 - Providing improvement support and consultancy services
 - Leading on capacity building within the sector
 - Facilitating learning and knowledge sharing
 - Developing policy
 - Ensuring RPA is implemented in the most beneficial way
 - Ensuring good communication and engagement
 - Providing the Employers' function

- Expand resources base through subscriptions, central government grants, and charging structure
- Develop more robust staff training and development arrangements
- Develop a performance management framework to manage expectations, profile achievements, celebrate successes and address shortfalls

For Central Government:

- Designate NILGA as a statutory partner and named as the principal local government vehicle for strengthening central/local relations
- Provide additional resources to increase senior management and policy capacity
- Confirm NILGA as a key partner in the capacity building programme for local government

For SOLACE NI:

- Re-new its engagement with a strengthened NILGA and commit to providing high level advice to it

For the Local Government Staff Commission:

- Share resources and expertise with NILGA to better deliver the Commission's current mission and prepare local government to take on additional functions

For Political Parties

- Invest political capital by fielding senior and experienced members onto NILGA
- Develop capacity of members and common party view of local government

Next Steps

- NILGA to produce response and implementation plan

Comments and Questions.....