

Case study

Client: Northern Ireland Local Government Association

Project: Strategic Review

Dates: May-November 2005

Carried out by: Peter Hyde

Requirement

NILGA was created in October 2001. Unlike its predecessor, it had support from all parties and all Councils in Northern Ireland. The period since 2001 had been spent establishing the new organisation and it felt that it would now be timely, following local elections, to undertake a review to help position the organisation to go forward over the next four years, building on its achievements to date.

What we did

We interviewed a wide range of stakeholders: LACORS Board members, management and staff, staff from the four local government associations: LGA, WLGA, COSLA, NILGA, senior officials from a number of government departments and agencies, and consumer, professional and trade associations. We also critically assessed NILGA's current structure and mode of operation and undertook a survey of Councillors.

The review concluded that NILGA had a very high level of legitimacy, and had succeeded in keeping all Councils and all parties on board – a significant achievement given what had gone before. It had created an effective forum for cross-party dialogue and established itself with government as an important stakeholder and an automatic consultee. It delivered good value for money.

The Review of Public Administration offered considerable opportunities for NILGA to consolidate its position and to influence the future operation of local government for the good of its members and of the citizens of Northern Ireland.

The main issues which needed to be addressed were: longer term strategy; political engagement; Councillor / Council engagement; governance; policy capacity; relationships with key stakeholders, especially SOLACE; organisation and staffing.

Outcomes

The report was accepted by the NILGA Executive and many of the recommendations have already been acted upon.