



Adrian Waite (Independent Consultancy Services) Limited

Annual Report 2004/2005

By Adrian Waite, Managing Director

In my 2003/2004 report, I explained why 'AWICS' has always described itself as an 'ethical' management consultancy, and what makes it different from most management consultancies?

We are passionate about public services. That is why I decided to enter local government service in 1981. That is why I founded 'AWICS' as an ethical management consultancy to provide support to those who provide public services – in all parts of Britain and also abroad! We want to make a real contribution to improving public services because they are so important to the fabric of our society.

As a senior officer in local government I was frequently concerned at the partiality, low value and high cost of consultancy support that was sometimes received by public services. That is why I decided that there was a need for a new 'ethical' management consultancy. Our mission statement is 'Independence, Integrity, Value'. We approach our work from an independent standpoint – not burdened with our own preconceptions and objectives – but with a genuine wish to help the client to achieve their objective. Our consultants are of the highest calibre. We observe the highest standards of integrity that should be expected of any consultant working with public services. We offer 'value for money' with fee rates that are the most competitive that are available today.

This is not to say that 'AWICS' is a non-profit making organisation. 'AWICS' is a commercial company. The fact that the company is profitable is neither concealed nor apologised for. So – how can we offer such outstanding value for money?

We are able to offer outstanding value for money because we operate with low overheads and make maximum use of modern technology to deliver services to our clients. Our highly competitive fees do not have to contribute to a large corporate overhead – because a large corporate overhead does not exist!

We are big enough to make a difference – but small enough to care!

This report covers the year 2004/2005, the sixth year of trading and another very successful one.

Turnover was £80,164 during the year compared with £68,043 during the previous year. This represents an increase of £12,121 or 18%. Gross profit was £42,664 during the year compared with £28,705 during the previous year. This represents an increase of £13,959 or 49%. The increased profit arose from an increase in turnover combined with a reduction in costs.

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Managing Director: Adrian Waite MA CPFA ACIH FIPSM. Company Secretary: Elaine Waite
Company Number: 3713554. VAT Registration Number: 721 9669 13

It is now clear that 'AWICS' has been able to sustain this strong growth into 2005/2006.

During the year we had one full-time and five part-time employees. We also had six associate consultants.

We now have about a hundred clients, mainly public organisations that take advantage of our services in providing:

- Support in Housing Finance, including:
 - Training
 - Business Planning
 - Housing Stock Options Appraisals
- Support in Business and Best Value Reviews and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- Financial Advice on Procurement
- Public Authority Accounting
- Performance Management
- Lecturing and Training

And we made a real contribution to improving public services in many areas. The following illustrate just a few of the projects to which we have contributed during the year:

We were successful in tendering for the position of Independent Tenants' Adviser at Fenland District Council during their Housing Stock Options Appraisal. Our role was to ensure that the tenants of Fenland were empowered to take a decision on the future of their homes and neighbourhoods and were able to do so from a position of knowledge. We worked with the Tenants' Forum, Tenants' Associations and the tenant body at large to ensure that everyone understood all the issues and could participate in all the decisions. We did this through holding meetings, visiting housing estates and sheltered housing schemes, issuing newsletters, working through the press and other media and providing a freephone service for tenants with questions and issues to discuss. We advised the tenant-led Options Appraisal Working Group that managed the whole process and provided training to members of the Working Group and other active tenants. We identified the needs and aspirations of tenants for their homes and neighbourhoods through a survey, carrying out workshops and analysing the issues that were raised on the freephone service. We provided tenants with a critical analysis of information that was provided by the Council and the Lead Consultant, and supported the Tenants' Forum in lobbying successfully for changes in the Council's financial strategies. At the conclusion of the process, the Options Appraisal Working Group identified stock transfer as the option that was most likely to deliver the improvements that tenants were seeking and we managed a consultation with all tenants in the district on this conclusion. The consultation was managed through a real-time internet-based data analysis system that we developed that provided not only the totals in support and against each option but a sophisticated analysis at geographical and tenant-type level. On a high turnout, 52% of tenants who responded supported the conclusion that stock transfer should be pursued. The Council is now developing its stock transfer option and we have been re-engaged as Independent Tenants' Adviser.

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Regional Government Offices had to evaluate the housing stock options appraisals that were submitted to them by local authorities and this included evaluating the financial analysis that had been undertaken by Councils and their consultants to ensure that their data was robust, their assumptions reasonable, and their submissions compliant with the guidance issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. We were engaged by the Government Offices for London and Eastern England to carry out the financial evaluations of the housing stock options appraisals of a number of local authorities.

High Peak Borough Council established an Arms Length Management Organisation that included the Council's former Building Direct Labour Organisation. We were engaged to advise on the procurement and management of repairs and maintenance in this new situation.

East Dunbartonshire Council engaged us to review the budgets of their Education Department.

We continued to provide training courses to a wide range of authorities including: Cambridge City Council, the Greater London Authority, Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation, Rossendale Borough Council, St. Albans District Council, Slough Borough Council and Waveney District Council.

I was pleased to accept speaking engagements during the year for the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the National Council of Voluntary Organisations. During the year 'AWICS' also became an accredited consultancy for voluntary organisations with the National Council of Voluntary Organisations.

Our contribution to making improvements in public services has therefore been significant. Our potential to do even more in the future is even greater.

I also believe in the importance of making a voluntary contribution where appropriate. I am a member of the Housing and European Panels of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

This annual report is designed to give you a flavour of what 'AWICS' is about. We also have a website and welcome enquiries at our office. Both addresses are shown below.

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Managing Director
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