

AWICS Independence.....Integrity.....Value

Adrian Waite (Independent Consultancy Services) Limited

Annual Report 2005/2006

By Adrian Waite, Managing Director

'AWICS' is 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.

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 both 'quality' and 'value for money'.

We are not the largest management consultancy. However, we are big enough to make a difference – but small enough to care!

This report covers the year 2005/2006, the seventh year of trading and another very successful one.

Turnover was £119,972 during the year compared with £80,164 during the previous year. This represents an increase of £39,808 or 50%. Gross profit was £70,710 during the year compared with £42,664 during the previous year. This represents an increase of £28,046 or 66%. The increased profit arose from an increase in turnover combined with a less than proportionate increase in costs.

It is now clear that 'AWICS' has been able to sustain this level of turnover and profitability into 2006/2007.

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

Our increasing numbers of clients include national government departments, local authorities and others who provide public services.

**Appleby Business Centre, Bridge Street, Appleby in Westmorland, Cumbria CA16 6QH
Telephone: 017683-52347 or 54005 Mobile: 07971-321863. Fax: 017683-54005.
E-Mail: Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk. Website: www.awics.co.uk.**

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

The services that we have provided include:

- Consultancy
 - National Government
 - Local Government
- Training
 - Regional Seminars
 - In-house training
 - Lecturing
- Independent Tenants Advice
- Publications

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:

Consultancy – National Government

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, Eastern England, Southwestern England and the East Midlands to carry out the financial evaluations of the housing stock options appraisals of a number of local authorities. We are continuing to work with regional government offices in 2006/07.

Consultancy – Local Government

We offer a wide range of consultancy services to local authorities principally on management, financial and housing issues. For example, we assisted Cambridge City Council with the implementation of rent restructuring; Southwark Borough Council with the financial analysis required for their housing stock options appraisal; South Derbyshire District Council with housing revenue account business planning; and Warrington Borough Council with a 'health check' of their housing revenue account. We are continuing to work with local authorities on housing and other issues during 2006/07.

Training – Regional Seminars

In February 2006 we launched a series of regional seminars on 'All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance'. These were attended by representatives of national government, local government (including Members and officers), arms length management organisations, private companies and voluntary organisations. During 2006/07 we are expanding our programme of regional seminars with an autumn series on 'Sustainable Housing Business Plans and the Efficiency Agenda', a spring series on 'Housing Association Finance' and another spring series of 'All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance'.

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Training – In-house courses

We continued to provide in-house training courses to a wide range of authorities including: Bristol City Council, Derby Homes, Portsmouth City Council, Slough Borough Council and Southampton City Council. In-house training courses are available on a wide and increasing range of management, financial and housing topics.

Training – Lecturing

I was pleased to accept speaking engagements during the year for the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland. Subjects covered included housing finance, the local government statement of recommended practice (SORP) and efficiency and effectiveness in social housing.

Independent Tenants' Advice

We were successful in tendering for the position of Independent Tenants' Adviser at Fenland District Council during their Housing Stock Options Appraisal that was completed in June 2005. 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.

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The Council is now developing its stock transfer option and we were re-engaged as Independent Tenants' Advisor by the Tenants' Forum in October 2005. Our role is to ensure that the tenants of Fenland are empowered to take a decision on the future of their homes and neighbourhoods and are able to do so from a position of knowledge. We work with the Tenants' Forum, Tenants' Associations and the tenant body at large to ensure that everyone understands all the issues and participates in all the decisions. We do 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 advise the tenant-led Transfer Options Development Group that manages the whole process on matters including the selection of the housing association partner. We also advise tenant members of the Shadow Board of the new Roddons Housing Association. This work continues in 2006/07 with a ballot of tenants expected in November 2006.

Publications

During the year we published a 100 page guide entitled 'All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance'. During 2006/07 we will broaden our range of publications and have already published 'Sustainable Housing Business Plans and the Efficiency Agenda'.

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.

Adrian Waite
Managing Director
September 2006

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