

Annual Report 2008/09

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 2008/09, the tenth year of trading and another very successful one. Turnover was the highest level ever achieved, representing an increase of 23% over the previous year. Gross profit increased compared with the previous year. It is now clear that 'AWICS' has been able to increase this level of turnover and profitability in 2009/10. During the year we had one full-time and six part-time employees. We also had seven associate consultants.

Our increasing numbers of clients include national government departments, local authorities, housing associations, arms length management organisations, professional bodies and others who provide public services. The services that we provide include:

- Regional Seminars
- In-House Training
- Management Consultancy
- 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:

Regional Seminars

Our programme of regional seminars was launched in February 2006 with a series of five sessions of 'All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance' that were held in various venues around England during February and March 2006. Since then we have developed the 'All You Want to Know about... ' series to provide an introduction and overview of a range of important subjects. We also offer more technical regional seminars.

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Company Number: 3713554. VAT Registration Number: 721 9669 13.

Subjects presented during 2008/09 included:

- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Finance
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance
- All You Want to Know about Housing Association Finance
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Finance in Scotland
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance in Scotland
- All You Want to Know about Scottish Housing Association Finance
- All You Want to Know about Welsh Housing Association Finance
- Budgets and Financial Management in the Public Sector for Non-Financial People
- Implementing the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Developments in Local Authority Housing Finance in England
- Achieving Efficiencies and Value for Money in Social Housing

Our regional seminars are well received by the delegates who attend who find that the training and information provided enables them to become more effective in their roles. Organisations attending our regional seminars include central government, local government, housing associations, academic institutions and others.

We have developed the range of regional seminars further in 2009/10.

In-House Training

In-House Training courses were provided to Government Regional Offices, Local Authorities and Arms Length Management Organisations on:

- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Finance
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance
- Budgets and Financial Management in the Public Sector
- Developments in Local Authority Housing Finance in England
- Achieving Efficiencies and Value for Money in Social Housing
- Implementing the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Estate Regeneration and Development
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance in Scotland
- All You Want to Know about Housing Association Finance in Scotland
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance in Wales

Clients included:

- Ashford District Council
- Bournemouth Borough Council
- Canterbury City Council
- Carlisle City Council
- Copeland Borough Council
- Gateshead Borough Council
- Government Office West Midlands
- Hebridean Housing Partnership
- Milton Keynes Borough Council
- North Lincolnshire Council
- Perth & Kinross Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- River Clyde Homes
- Salford City Council
- Salisbury District Council
- Thurrock Borough Council
- Wrexham Borough Council

As a result of this, Councillors, Board Members, Civil Servants, Housing Staff, Finance Staff, Tenant representatives and others have been empowered to carry out their roles to greater effect. We are continuing to expand the range of in-house training available and a brochure that outlines the opportunities that are on offer is available on our website.

Management Consultancy

We offer a wide range of consultancy services to local authorities and others principally on management, financial and housing issues. For example, we assisted; Basildon District Council with a housing stock options appraisal; Enfield Borough Council with the development of their Housing Revenue Account Business Plan; London Area Procurement Network with the evaluation of efficiency gains in procurement; Salford City Council with value for money strategy; the Scottish Housing Regulator with housing inspection; and Waltham Forest Borough Council with financial modelling for new build Council housing.

We are continuing to work with local authorities and other public bodies on housing and other issues during 2009/10.

Publications

We publish a range of books relevant to people with an interest in public services. Titles available during 2008/09 included:

- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Finance
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance
- All You Want to Know about Housing Association Finance
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance in Wales
- All You Want to Know about Welsh Housing Association Finance
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Finance in Scotland
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance in Scotland
- All You Want to Know about Scottish Housing Association Finance
- Sustainable Housing Business Plans and the Efficiency Agenda
- Arms Length Management Organisations – Freedoms, Flexibilities and the Future
- Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 – Implications for Local Authorities and Housing
- Implementing the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Developments in Local Authority Housing Finance in England
- Achieving Efficiencies and Value for Money in Social Housing
- Budgets and Financial Management in the Public Sector for Non-Financial People
- Developments in Housing Finance in Scotland – The Implications of the Green Paper

Professional Bodies

During the year 'AWICS' was invited to speak at a conference organised by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (Northern Ireland).

We also publish the electronic newsletter the 'Public Services News'.

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. During the year I was a member of the Housing and European Panels of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; an Honorary Fellow and President of the Institute of Public Sector Management; a Member of the Working Party established by Communities & Local Government and HM Treasury on the Review of Council Housing Finance; and an Advisor to the Campaign to Protect Rural England on Housing.

This annual report is designed to give you a flavour of what 'AWICS' is about. We also have two websites and welcome enquiries by e-mail, telephone or at our office. Addresses are shown below.

Adrian Waite
Managing Director