



IPSM E-BULLETIN
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Hon. Secretary

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**THE BROWN ERA: NEW
BEGINNINGS FOR PUBLIC
SERVICES?**

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(The photograph on the front cover of this edition of E-Topics shows The Dock Offices, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan. This building was constructed near the end of the 19th Century, and is currently home to various Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council departments.)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 17th edition of E-Topics. This, the winter 2007-08 edition of the IPSM's magazine, is being published shortly after the EGM held on 24th January, which was convened for the purpose of amending the Institute's quorum for General Meetings. The Institute's latest Council meeting also took place on Thursday 24th January, in the Methodist International Centre, Euston Street, Euston, London.

As stated on page 2, the photograph on the front cover of this edition of E-Topics depicts The Dock Offices, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan. This building was constructed near the end of the 19th Century, and is currently home to various Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council departments. It is in many ways typical of the grand and creative architecture of a bygone era, as well as being typical of the splendour of many public service buildings (particularly Town Halls) constructed around that time, when (supposedly at least) local government rarely had to answer to central government, being master of its own domain, a domain that certainly included a far wider range of services than now, especially since the 1974 reorganisation of local government.

Various newspapers, periodicals and local government journals have heralded a reported change of heart by the Government, now led by Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, MP and Prime Minister, in place of Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP. This change of heart allegedly includes a slackening of Central Government's grip on public services, especially local government.

Do you feel that this change is (a) real; (b) illusory, forming part of yet another Government "spin", or; (c) non-existent?! I am keen to hear your views. Either write to me (e-mail is equally acceptable) or tell everyone what you think via the Institute's members-only discussion forum. Responses will be published in the next edition of E-Topics – I look forward to a lively ongoing debate!

Derek Wolfe, FIPSM,
President and Hon. Secretary

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

I am delighted to welcome the IPSM's newest members to the Institute. They are **Iain Smith** (Principal Officer (Education Resources), Education Department, Western Isles Council) **Nigel Long** (Strategy & Partnerships Manager, Strategic & Community Housing Services Department, London Borough of Haringey) and **Jane Williamson** (Commissioning Manager (Supporting Families & Children) Children's Services Department, Cumbria County Council.)

I am also very pleased to welcome **Natalie Parker** into full membership of the Institute. Natalie joined as a student member in September 2005, and is the first IPSM student to become a full member; she works as a Community Staff Nurse for the Barnet Primary Care Trust, in North London. In addition, I am very pleased to report that **Professor John Stewart**, for many years the Chief Executive of InLoGov, the much-respected academic think-tank based at Birmingham University, has been offered and has accepted Honorary Fellowship of the Institute.

NATIONAL PLAIN ENGLISH DAY

“National Plain English Day” took place on Tuesday 11 December 2007. To mark the occasion, the Local Government Association (LGA) has published a list of 100 words that it states public bodies should not use if they want to communicate effectively. Local government leaders say that unless councils talk to their residents in a language they can understand, the work councils undertake in attempting to communicate with them is wasted, resulting in councils remaining or becoming inaccessible to their communities.

This in turn reduces the chances of “the man and woman in the street” getting involved in local issues. The full list of the LGA’s top “banned” 100 words is set out below, in alphabetical order:-

1. ambassador
2. agencies
3. beacon
4. best practice
5. bottom-up
6. CAAs
7. can do culture
8. capacity
9. capacity building
10. cascading
11. cautiously welcome
12. champion
13. citizen empowerment
14. community engagement
15. conditionality
16. consensual
17. contestability
18. core message
19. core value
20. coterminosity
21. coterminous
22. cross-cutting
23. customer
24. democratic mandate/legitimacy
25. distorts spending priorities

26. early win
27. empowerment
28. engagement
29. engaging users
30. enhance
31. evidence base
32. external challenge
33. facilitate
34. fast-track
35. flexibilities and freedoms
36. framework
37. fulcrum
38. good practice
39. governance
40. guidelines
41. holistic
42. holistic governance
43. improvement levers
44. incentivising
45. income/funding streams
46. initiative
47. joined up
48. joint working
49. LAAs
50. level playing field

51. localities
52. meaningful consultation/dialogue
53. MAAs
54. menu of options
55. multi-agency
56. multidisciplinary
57. outcomes
58. output
59. participatory
60. partnerships
61. pathfinder
62. peer challenge
63. performance network
64. place shaping
65. predictors of beaconicity
66. preventative services
67. priority
68. process driven
69. quick hit
70. quick win
71. resource allocation
72. revenue streams
73. risk based
74. scaled-back
75. scoping

76. seedbed
77. service users
78. shared priority
79. signpost
80. single point of contact
81. slippage
82. social contracts
83. stakeholder
84. step change
85. strategic/overarching
86. streamlined
87. subsidiary
88. sustainable
89. sustainable communities
90. symposium
91. synergies
92. tested for soundness
93. third sector
94. top-down
95. transformational
96. transparency
97. value-added
98. vision
99. visionary
100. welcome”

(Article by Rodger Lawrence,

Council member and former President & Hon. Treasurer)

IPSM COUNCIL 2008

As a result of the outcome of the Institute's reconvened AGM in November 2007, the IPSM's Council for 2008 is as shown above. Although there are currently three vacancies in the Institute's 12-strong governing body, Natalie Parker, Michelle Smith and Owen Wilson have all recently expressed an interest in being co-opted for the remainder of 2008. Appointments are generally confirmed as and when each would-be co-optee attends their first Council meeting.

Name	Address	Phone Number	E-Mail Address
IPSM HQ	45 Cherry Tree Road Axminster DEVON EX13 5GG	01297 35423 (Main HQ) 01446 401212 (Wales – weekday evenings only)	info@ipsm.org.uk (all)
Maurice Condie	St Silas Church, Clifford Street, Byker, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE6 1PG	0191 265 8621 (work)	Maurice.condie@bykerbridge.org.uk (all)
Stephen Guile	SOMERSET	(Via HQ)	(Via HQ)
Martin Harvey	POWYS, WALES	(Via HQ)	Martin.harvey@ipsm.org.uk (all)
Rodger Lawrence	BIRMINGHAM	(Via HQ)	(Via HQ)
Peter Nourse	SOMERSET	(Via HQ)	peter.nourse@ipsm.org.uk (all)
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(THREE VACANCIES)			
Adrian Waite	AWICS Appleby Business Centre Bridge Street Appleby-in- Westmorland CUMBRIA, CA16 6QH	01768 352347 (work switchboard) 01768 352165 (work direct) 07971 321863 (mobile)	Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk (work) awaite@ukonline.co.uk (home)
Derek Wolfe	45 Cherry Tree Road Axminster DEVON EX13 5GG	01297 35423 (home weekend) 01446 401212 (home weekdays) 01446 704920 (work) 07951 514583 (mobile)	acdf47@btopenworld.com (home weekend) Derek.wolfe1@ntlworld.com (home weekdays) executiveofficer@ntlbusiness.com (work)

COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW 2007

Coverage of the Comprehensive Spending Review has tended to focus on tax changes and public sector budgets. However, examination of the small print reveals some worrying trends.

First, economic growth has recently averaged 2.75% a year. Of this, 2.25% is driven by increased consumer spending, 0.75% by increased public spending and only 0.25% by business investment. The effect of foreign trade is negative, causing an annual decline of 0.5% in the economy as increases in imports exceed increases in exports. Much of the increased consumer expenditure is financed by consumer credit. We therefore have a private sector that is dependent on government expenditure and consumer credit and is failing to compete internationally or to invest. The financial sector does not look as strong as it used to following the 'run' on the Northern Rock.

Second, the government plans to spend £456billion on social security during the comprehensive spending review period. This is the largest single government budget, dwarfing those for Education and Communities & Local Government (at £168billion and £112billion respectively) and comprises 23% of total public expenditure. It is also notoriously difficult to control. The economy is therefore providing insufficient employment, inadequate salaries or wages and inadequate pensions to millions of people whose income therefore needs to be supplemented by the benefits system.

Third, examination of public services including housing, health, education and local government reveals levels of need increasing more rapidly than inflation. This results in part from increases in population (especially the elderly population) but also from the condition of the economy. For example, 1.6million people are currently on social housing waiting lists and newly arising need for social housing is 40,000 a year. Rising property values, fuelled by increased borrowing, are putting home ownership out of the reach of increasing numbers of people. The government has provided £8billion for new affordable homes compared to the £11.6billion that the sector calculated was required. The economy is therefore failing to provide housing to an increasing proportion of the population and despite increased budgets the public sector is failing to make up the difference.

Fourth, there is a worrying increase in the number of people experiencing problems with debt or becoming bankrupt. The levels of credit that have fuelled the economy and the housing market appear to be creating financial hardship and therefore putting increased pressure on public budgets.

Perhaps the underlying cause of problems in the public finances is the condition of the private sector. Perhaps the time has come for the government to address the reform of the private sector – in particular the need to ensure appropriate investment to maintain competitiveness, the operation of the financial sector and housing markets, and the need to ensure wider access to employment with decent remuneration including pensions.

**Adrian Waite,
Vice-President**

SPIRALS' TRAINING COURSES – NEWS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Spirals, the Institute's strategic learning & development partners, have drastically revamped its open programme to make it a lot more comprehensive. The following are the courses being run in the spring, together with details of Spirals recently announced NVQ 4-level Diploma in Management qualification. Please direct your enquiries regarding any of Spirals courses / qualifications to David Elverson who can be reached on the telephone number / fax number / e-mail address set out below.

All of the courses will be held in the Cambridge area and IPSM members are obviously entitled to the same discount as before (20%). However, prices have come down to £245 for a one day course, so IPSM members can attend for just £196. The spring programme of Spirals Open Courses is as follows:-

Delivering Successful Projects	Thursday 10 th April & Friday 11 th April
Managing Meetings	Thursday 24 th April
Confident Recruitment	Monday 12 th May & Tuesday 13 th May
Getting Organised – Making the Most Effective Use of Your Time	Tuesday 20 th May
Powerful Presentations	Thursday 29 th May
Delivering Successful Projects	Monday 9 th June & Tuesday 10 th June
Process Mapping	Tuesday 24 th June

IPSM members interested in any of the above courses should contact us for further details. In a fortnight's time we will have a brochure describing all of the courses, available as a PDF document for displaying on the IPSM website, if that would be helpful.

David Elverson, MSc MCIM, Commercial Director, Spirals Ltd.

Tel: 01953 602505 Fax: 01953 605800

Email: david@spiralsplus.com

.....take a look at our new website www.spiralsplus.com

	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Event	Induction ½ day	Workshop 1	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 2	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 3	Workshop 4	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 5	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 6	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 7	½ day support Meeting	Workshop 8	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 9	½ day Support Meeting	Project Presentation
Dates	7 th Feb 2008	6 th Mar 2008	7 th April 2008	8 th May 2008	11 th June 2008	11 th July 2008	6 th Aug 2008	11 th Sept 2008	6 th Oct 2008	13 th Nov 2008	8 th Dec 2008	12 th Jan 2009	13 th Feb 2009	11 th Mar 2009	9 th April 2009	8 th May 2009	10 th June 2009	17 th July 2009	9 th Sept 2009
IM Modules		C51		C52		O54	C54		C55		C53		O53		O55		O52		
Facilitated by:	CW & MMN	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CC	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW & MMN
Start Assignment		C51		C52		O54	C54		C55		C53		O53		O55		O52		
Submit Assignment				C51		C52		O54	C54		C55		C53		O53		O55		O52
Project Milestones						Agreement on Title						Progress Review						Hand In Project	Presen- tation
Venue	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	Manor Farm Barns

Open Executive Diploma in Management – 2008/2009

C51 – Development in your Management
and
Leadership Role

C55 – Managing Operations

C52 – Managing Performance

O52 – Managing Information Systems

C53 – Financial & Resource Management

O53 – Developing & Implementing Human Resource Plans

C54 – Managing Business Challenges

O54 – Developing Project Specifications and Objectives

O55 – Developing & Implementing Marketing Plans

Note: Half day Support Meetings will take place in the morning 09:30 – 12:30

All Workshops will run 09:30 – 16:30

CW = Charles Walker

CC = Chris Cleary

MMN = Maria Marques-Neves

AWICS SEMINARS – NEWS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Hello,

I am writing to let you know that we are holding a series of our seminars that will address 'Achieving Efficiencies and Value for Money in Social Housing'. These will be held between March and May 2008. Our speakers will be Steve Harriott (former Chief Executive of Amicus Horizon and now an 'AWICS' Associate Consultant) and myself.

The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review placed increased emphasis on achieving value for money and efficiency in all public services including social housing. In both England and Scotland there are Housing Green papers that require social housing providers to become more efficient and achieve greater value for money in new build, improvements, management and maintenance. Housing Associations in England have been given targets to deliver new affordable housing at lower grant rates while in Scotland a new strategic and competitive approach is proposed. Efficiency targets have been increased in both England and Scotland. These matters are also relevant to social housing providers in Wales.

Most housing organisations are now developing value for money strategies and procurement strategies and are getting to grips with OJEU procurement processes. There is still, however, a great deal of confusion about Value for Money and Efficiency and some approaches have complicated what should be a simple issue. Furthermore, some front line staff still have a limited understanding of Value for Money and Efficiency issues and how they contribute to this.

This seminar will consider government requirements for achieving greater efficiency and value for money in social housing and examine approaches that are being taken by successful housing organisations.

What the course will cover:

- Value for Money and Efficiency in a Strategic context
- The regulatory requirements
- OJEU requirements
- Examples of how Value for Money and Efficiency is being delivered in a range of housing organisations
- Examples of how the most successful organisations have embedded value of money in their organisations and delivered staff commitment.

The session in Edinburgh will make specific reference to the situation in Scotland.

The course is accompanied by a very useful book entitled: "Achieving Efficiencies and Value for Money in Social Housing"

Venues and Dates:

Nottingham: Westminster Hotel – 12th March 2008

St. Helens: Haydock Racecourse – 15th April 2008

London: Euston Square Hotel – 24th April 2008

Edinburgh: Capital Hotel – 14th May 2008

A brochure and booking form can be downloaded from:

www.awics.co.uk/regionalseminars/housingvfmcourse.asp

We offer a wide range of other training courses – including one on developments in social housing finance in Scotland and a series of courses on local authority housing finance. Details of all our courses can be downloaded from our website at:

www.awics.co.uk/regionalseminars/index.asp

You are welcome to contact us directly by replying to this email or telephoning 017683-52347.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Waite

NB: I have sent you this message because I believe that you may find it relevant. If you would like your name to be removed from my mailing list, please log onto

www.awics.co.uk/unsubscribe.aspx

"AWICS" is an ethical management consultancy, providing support principally to those who provide public services. We offer "Independence, Integrity and Value".

For more information about "AWICS" please visit our website at www.awics.co.uk

Or contact us at:

AWICS Limited, Appleby Business Centre, Bridge Street, Appleby in Westmorland, Cumbria. CA16 6QH. Tel: 017683-52347 or 52165. Fax: 017683-54005. E-mail:

Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk

IPSM RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

As you may be aware, the Institute has decided that its number one goal between 2007 and 2012 will be recruiting new members to the IPSM. This decision was taken following a comprehensive consultation exercise carried out in the summer of 2006, when a detailed questionnaire was published in E-Topics and Topics. The results of this exercise were reported to the 2006 AGM, which was run in tandem with a special Development Event, skilfully facilitated by Simon Pomfret of Spirals Ltd. That event built upon the results of the earlier consultation exercise, and in January 2007 the results of the Development Event, together with the outcome of the consultation exercise, were reported back to and considered by the Institute's Council.

The upshot of all this was that Council, having listened to all the feedback obtained, agreed to pursue ten primary objectives during the next five years, with recruitment being the principal primary objective. It was intended that attempts should be made to grow the IPSM's membership to 1,000 by 2012, an extremely ambitious target, requiring an increase in the Institute's membership of more than 30% per annum! In order to make this possible, it was agreed (amongst other things) to launch a more intensive campaign via various journals circulating in the public sector. Examples of advertisements placed and recruitment letters sent are set out below and on the following pages:-

The INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

exists to cater for the needs of all managers working in the public, voluntary and not-for-profit sectors. We offer mentoring, training, career advice, conferences, seminars and occasional by-invitation events involving invited speakers promoting best practice in service provision. Members are entitled to use the designatory letters MIPSMA after their names, have access to a frequently updated web site, an internal discussion forum, and the Institute's quarterly journal TOPICS. Annual membership costs just £66, plus an initial joining fee of £25.



It makes good sense to join a professional organisation dedicated to the aims and ideals of public sector managers – please visit www.ipsm.org.uk for further information, including an e-brochure incorporating a membership application form and other details.

Alternatively, you can write to Derek Wolfe, our Hon. Secretary, at the IPSM's HQ, which is: 45 Cherry Tree Road, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5GG, or telephone him on 01297-35423 or e-mail him on info@ipsm.org.uk for further details. The IPSM is an experienced professional association, formed in 1982. Why not let a leading, mature organisation help you to excel, both as a professional manager, and as a service provider?

Dear Manager,

I am writing to draw your attention to a well-established support organisation set up to serve managers working in all areas of the public, voluntary and not-for-profit sectors. The IPSM has been providing a valuable support service to middle managers, senior managers, and those aspiring to advance their careers for almost 30 years. Managers in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Canada, France, Holland and Nigeria have enrolled in the IPSM, receiving regular training opportunities, a quarterly magazine, advice from other (senior) and established practitioners in their respective fields, and the opportunity to contribute to topical issues via our members-only discussion forum. The Institute also hosts an annual Conference and AGM, although in 2005 a topical training seminar took the place of a traditional "conference" with invited speakers.

Although most of our members work in local government, this is largely due to the origins of the IPSM, once known as the Association of Public Sector Administrative Staff (APSAS.) Full members are entitled to use the designatory letters "MIPSM" after their names, and Fellows follow their names with "FIPSM."

The IPSM has gained much respect in recent years, and is now consulted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the success or otherwise of existing legislation, and invited to give its views on future proposals. The Institute intends to persuade the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly to do likewise. For example, the Institute earlier this year was asked for its views on the future of Local Strategic Partnerships in England.

Membership is open to all managers with qualifications equivalent to or higher than a BTEC Higher National Award, or those who have worked in the public and/or voluntary sectors for more than five years and are working in a managerial post.

In the drive towards ever increasing economy and greater efficiency in public services, the manager is at the cutting edge of innovative thinking and improved performance. This places an emphasis on continual development and the sharing of best practice. For these reasons those who formed the Institute were keen to create a peer group of managers who could not only provide mutual support but would also seek to shape Government policy and thinking.

Membership costs £66 per calendar year, plus an initial once-off joining fee of £25. For your interest, I have attached a recent copy of the IPSM's magazine, called "Topics" (or E-Topics for those receiving their copies by e-mail.) Please browse our web site www.ipsm.org.uk for further details of the organisation, including an application form that can either be returned by post to our Devon HQ or by e-mail to info@ipsm.org.uk. Our Headquarters address has changed, and is now:-

Derek Wolfe, FIPSM, Hon. Secretary, I P S M, 45, Cherry Tree Road, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5GG. (Tel: (Axminster) 01297-35423) (Tel: (Barry) 01446-401212)

I look forward to welcoming you into membership very soon!

Yours sincerely,

Derek Wolfe,
Hon. Secretary.



THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

The Institute of Public Sector Management is the only membership body exclusively dedicated to managers working in the Public, Voluntary and Not-for-profit Sectors.

We have a diverse membership representing all areas of society and the public sector. As a member you will have access to a broad network, sharing knowledge, skills and experience, helping all members to deliver better public services.

Whether you're just starting out; considering your next career move; or looking for expert knowledge and support, the IPSM will be right there beside you. Membership of the Institute provides excellent networking potential with fellow public sector managers, and our links with training providers ensure you have access to up to the minute training and development.

All this, plus our members' magazine, e-newsletter and forum will help you grow in the exciting world of public sector management.

If you'd like to know more about joining, simply log onto our website www.ipsm.org.uk or call 01297-35423

The Institute of Public Sector Management
45 Cherry Tree Road, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5GG,
Telephone 01297-35423,
info@ipsm.org.uk

The advertisement set out on page 13 above, was in fact designed for use as a leaflet, for placing on noticeboards in local workplaces, to encourage your colleagues and other managers working in the public sector to make further enquiries about the benefits of becoming members via the contact details shown in the leaflet, and ultimately to join. Do please take advantage of the above, printing it out and displaying it wherever possible on workplace boards etc., or by handing copies of it to other managers. And the benefits of IPSM membership? Well, very few members take advantage of **all** the benefits that the IPSM has to offer, but to summarise, they are as follows:-

Designatory letters; Discussion Forum; E-Topics and / or Topics (Quarterly Journal); General meetings and conferences; Mentoring; Networking; One-day training courses; Qualification training; Seminars; Web-Site.

If you feel, as I do, that the IPSM is a valuable professional organisation with much to offer managers operating in or with the public, voluntary or not-for-profit sector, then why not alert your managerial colleagues to the Institute, inviting them to apply for membership, or alternatively referring them to IPSM HQ initially, if they require more information before making a decision about membership. Don't forget, the IPSM as one of its 25th anniversary celebratory initiatives, relaunched its "friends and colleagues recruitment scheme", whereby if one of your friends or colleagues joins the Institute as a result of being referred to the IPSM by you, then you both benefit to the tune of £15! In the case of an existing member, £15 in M&S gift vouchers (or similar, depending upon your preference) is awarded. The new member thus recruited is allowed a £15 discount off the £25 initial joining fee, reducing his/her first year outlay from £91 to £76.

Derek Wolfe, FIPSM,
President & Hon. Secretary.

Another example of a recent recruitment advertisement is set out below. Which of the advertisements, leaflets and letters do you feel are the most eye-catching, likely to attract new members to the Institute? Please e-mail your views to IPSM HQ, or alternatively write a letter or place your thoughts on the IPSM's internal discussion board:-



INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

In pursuit of excellence, catering for the needs of all managers in the public, voluntary and not-for-profit sector, offering:

- **Annual Conference & AGM**
 - **Quarterly Magazine (Topics)**
 - **Distinguishing Letters**
 - **Discussion Forum**
 - **Membership**
 - **Mentoring**
 - **Networking**
 - **Training**

For further details, contact Derek Wolfe, President and Hon. Secretary, IPSM, 45 Cherry Tree Road, Axminster, EX13 5GG, or telephone 01297-35423, or e-mail info@ipsm.org.uk, or visit our web-site at www.ipsm.org.uk .

‘AWICS’ – The Ethical Management Consultancy

Adrian Waite, the Vice-President of the Institute of Public Sector Management, is Managing Director of ‘AWICS’ – the ethical management consultancy that offers consultancy services to all those who provide public services – including public authorities and voluntary bodies. He says:

“We are passionate about public services. That is why I decided to enter local government in 1981. This is why I founded ‘AWICS’ in 1998 as an ‘ethical’ management consultancy to provide support to those who provide public services in all parts of Britain and 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 big enough to make a difference – but small enough to care!”

Adrian worked in local government as an accountant and as a senior manager from 1981 to 1998, becoming Assistant County Treasurer at Staffordshire County Council and then Finance Director and Strategic Director at Copeland Borough Council. In 1998 he left local government to found ‘AWICS’.

Since 1998 ‘AWICS’ has developed an impressive portfolio of principally public sector clients and has developed a reputation for providing quality services. The company is based in Appleby in Westmorland in Cumbria but offers services to clients in all parts of England, Scotland, Wales and abroad. There is a small staff based in the Appleby office and a team of Associate Consultants.

‘AWICS’ provides five main services:

- Regional Seminars
- In-House Training
- Management Consultancy
- Independent Tenants’ Advice
- Publishing

They also publish a periodic newsletter the ‘Public Services News’ and briefing papers on matters relevant to the public services that can be freely downloaded from their website.

The ‘AWICS’ 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. This course is an introduction and overview of the important and complex subject of local authority housing finance that is designed for the non-specialist. This proved a popular series and it was repeated in 2007 with a series of nine sessions held between February and November. Another series is taking place during 2008.

The programme of regional seminars has been further developed during 2007 and 2008 with seminars on offer including:

- All You Want to Know about Housing Association Finance (English, Scottish and Welsh versions)

- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance in Wales
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance in Scotland
- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Finance (English, Scottish and Welsh versions)
- Achieving Efficiencies and Value for Money in Social Housing

These 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. **Members of the Institute of Public Sector Management are entitled to a 10% discount.**

In-House Training courses have been provided to Government Regional Offices, Local Authorities and Arms Length Management Organisations. 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. The regional seminars are all available as in-house courses and other subjects are also offered. 'AWICS' is continuing to expand the range of in-house training available.

'AWICS' offers a wide range of consultancy services to local authorities and others principally on management, financial and housing issues. For example, they have assisted Birmingham City Council with a Value for Money Procurement Strategy for the Housing Services; Carlisle City Council with the development and delivery of training strategies and programmes for Members and managers; Harlow Borough Council with a range of accounting issues; Enfield Borough Council with their Housing Revenue Account Business Plan; South Derbyshire District Council with housing revenue account business planning; Canterbury City Council with setting rents and Warrington Borough Council with a 'health check' of their housing revenue account and with housing revenue account business planning.

'AWICS' acted as Independent Tenants' Adviser at Fenland District Council during their Housing Stock Options Appraisal that was completed in June 2005. The Council subsequently developed its stock transfer option and 'AWICS' was re-engaged as Independent Tenants' Advisor by the Tenants' Forum in October 2005. Their 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. They worked with the Tenants' Forum, Tenants' Associations and the tenant body at large to ensure that everyone understood all the issues and participated in all the decisions. They 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. They advised the tenant-led Transfer Options Development Group that managed the whole process on matters including the selection of the housing association partner. They also advised tenant members of the Shadow Board of the new Roddons Housing Association.

Fenland District Council balloted its tenants on stock transfer in November 2006. The result was that 54% of tenants supported the transfer. The transfer was successfully completed in November 2007.

'AWICS' also offers a range of publications on public sector management and financial topics. More information about 'AWICS' can be found on their websites at www.awics.co.uk and www.awics.eu.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following letter was recently received from Dave Punshon, FIPSM, President of the Institute for three years from 2004 to 2006 inclusive:-

Dear Colleagues

You will be pleased to know that after only nine months the neurological consultant has said that he does not want to see me for three years, as near as it gets to a 100% recovery. The complicated regime of diet and medication designed to lower blood pressure/ cholesterol has obviously worked, and the only flipside is not drinking beer and having to buy a completely new wardrobe. (Struggling through security shoeless and belt less was a remarkable sight)

Whilst being delighted with my recovery I realise that you do not get many second chances in life so I have decided to retire early and join Barbara in Spain.

The exact date has yet to be decided but is likely to be around March/April so there is plenty of time to plan the party.

As well as helping Barbara run our rental business in Spain, I will be relaunching my dormant management consultancy business so you might see me again.

Many thanks for you best wishes and support over the last 9 months.

Dave

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Supporting the Third Sector since 1988 - Dave Punshon 2008