



Addison & Associates
Planning Service Reviews –
securing improvement and efficiency savings

Addison & Associates were RTPI Consultants of the Year in 2006 with a special award for promoting and adopting best practice. In 2009 we were finalists for our work on developing the planning service benchmark for the IDeA/Planning Advisory Service.

Using this tool has enabled us to identify improvements and better value for money within local authority services. Our most recent reviews have been in Telford & Wrekin Council, Nottingham City Council, the London Borough of Newham and Wealden District Council.

Addison & Associates’ strengths

- Our extensive knowledge of the delivery of effective planning services
- Use of a methodology that has been proven through the successful completion of many previous projects of a similar nature
- Our involvement in a number of national research projects
- Use of the planning service benchmark of an “ideal planning service” used for planning peer reviews by IDeA and which we developed
- Use of other diagnostic tools which sit “below” the benchmark including LDF, development management, transport, and building control diagnostic tools
- Use of business process modelling software
- Knowledge of best practice in use elsewhere

This document summarises Addison & Associates’ approach to the conduct of a typical service review.

Ideally the review will relate to the whole planning service, i.e. including both the development management and the planning policy functions together with any other functions which are within, or closely related to, the service, for example, transport, building control, waste management. Separate but integrated evaluations are conducted of each area of activity, with special reference to the integration between these different areas in order to deliver best practice. For example, to deliver the development management agenda it is essential that the teams managing planning applications and enforcement work closely with policy, transport functions and building control.

Our benchmark is the IDeA benchmark of an ideal planning service and the more detailed diagnostic tools for LDF, development management, transport, and building control which we have developed. These cover the deeper scope required in respect of cultural and organisational issues, the use made of I.T. tools and data, as well as budget and other resources. They provide a consistently applied framework that highlights where improvements are needed as well as where savings can be made. They start from the need to provide a quality service not a budget cut but can result in both or more effective use of resources.

The outcomes from the review comprise an action plan including short-term actions/quick wins and a longer term improvement plan. The nature of the recommendations brought forward will vary widely between one authority and another as each authority is unique in how they are organised and what they want to achieve.

The completion of a review of the planning service will enable an authority to be confident that its services are effective and efficient and compare favourably with best practice

Addison & Associates will provide:

✓	Comprehensive review of the planning service
✓	Action Plan - quick wins to deliver short-term benefits
✓	Improvement Plan – identified options for improvement, relating to business process, use of I.T., working with partners, alternative mechanisms for service delivery, realisation of efficiency savings

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Improving effectiveness