

Excellence in service delivery



Making sense of local complexity

Local authorities and their partnerships are faced with massive challenges. But they also have huge opportunities to manage this complexity to improve outcomes, value for money and choice for local people.

Inside we outline the challenges faced by local authorities and the solutions offered by SQW Consulting.

New opportunities for local government

The Local Government White Paper (2006) signalled a new emphasis on place, and excellent community leadership, governance and performance management are fundamental for success. Local Area Agreements (LAAs), Multi-Area Agreements, and the transition from Comprehensive Performance Assessment to Comprehensive Area Assessment, as well as the implications of the Sub-National Review 2007, mean the scope and potential for councils and their partners to join up on this complex delivery agenda presents both opportunities and challenges.

Improvement and efficiency

There are corresponding challenges for the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) in bringing together the former responsibilities of Regional Improvement Partnerships and Regional Centres for Excellence, and working closely with local government across a range of improvement and efficiency priorities. RIEPs have a wealth of opportunities to support councils in delivering LAA outcomes, achieving efficiency and innovation, and building capacity, as well as representing the sector at the national level.

At a national level, the priorities for these partnerships have been clearly established as:

- value for money and achievement of efficiency targets
- innovation
- community empowerment
- local economic growth.

While regional priorities vary, the principles of improvement and efficiency are shared, and delivery foci identified so far include:

- adult social care
- children's services
- community empowerment and safety
- economic growth
- climate change
- waste.

How can SQW help local councils, LSPs and RIEPs?

For our regional, sub-regional and local clients, finding constructive ways to respond to changes in their strategy and delivery environment and seek improvements and efficiencies is part and parcel of running their organisations.

SQW Consulting is well placed to support these clients as they determine their strategies and implement priority programmes. SQW has considerable experience in supporting the understanding of, and response to, new challenges, including supporting business reviews, re-structures, and governance arrangements for partnerships.

We can help local authorities and their partnerships to map the "big picture", identify strategic choices, and engage key stakeholders including elected members. We can help at all or any stages in the strategy process cycle, from developing the vision, to identifying gaps or needs on the basis of evidence, to action planning and facilitating implementation.

Support for challenges

We offer specific support with challenges in the following areas:

- Tackling deprivation
- LAAs, partnerships and performance management
- Sustainable development and sustainable communities
- Economic development and regeneration
- Children and young people, and adult skills and worklessness.

More information

Separate pamphlets introduce our capability and offers in these areas.



Examples of experience

Tackling deprivation

Nottingham City Council and One Nottingham – study of multiple deprivation to support the “State of the City” report

Communities and Local Government – Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders National Evaluation

LAAs, partnerships and performance management

Improvement and Development Agency – LAA case studies

London Councils – review of grant making

Sustainable development and sustainable communities

Local Government Association – using fiscal incentives to reduce household and business carbon emissions

West Midlands Regional Assembly / Advantage West Midlands – the causes and character of sustainable rural communities

Economic development and regeneration

East of England Development Agency / Regional Cities East / local authorities in the East of England – Integrated Development Programmes

South East England Development Agency - South East Coastal Strategy and Framework for Action

Children and young people, and adult worklessness

Department of Children, Schools and Families – evaluation of the Childcare Affordability Programme

Learning and Skills Council – review of local authorities’ transport policies for 16-18 year olds

Our services and expertise

Our services and expertise include the following:

- Research and policy development – using a range of qualitative and quantitative techniques to define issues and opportunities and clarify choices for policy makers
- Strategy development and action planning – bringing partners together to develop long term goals and shorter term actions to achieve them
- Partnership support and facilitation, and governance – helping to build capacity and trust at senior levels
- Learning and evaluation – devising frameworks, processes and indicators to measure and learning from performance

Our clients

Our clients include the following:

- county, district and unitary councils and their partnerships, and their regional representative bodies
- Improvement and Development Agency
- Local Government Association
- Whitehall Departments, including CLG, BERR, DCSF, DIUS, DWP and DEFRA
- devolved administrations
- Regional Development Agencies
- Homes and Communities Agency and predecessor bodies
- funding bodies
- Sector Skills Councils

About SQW Consulting

SQW Consulting is a leading independent consultancy in the area of sustainable economic and social development. Founded in Cambridge in 1983 by Nick Segal, Roger Quince and Bill Wicksteed, the firm now employs over 80 staff at its offices in Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leeds, London and Manchester.

Our consultants bring extensive experience to their assignments, with backgrounds in academia, national and local government, industry, and development agencies. In all of our work we employ the principles of rigorous analysis, collaborative working, commitment to quality and independence of thought.

We have a strong track record of analytical research across the various tiers of government and governance. The firm's geographic spread of experience across the UK and beyond, and our ability to join up between tiers / sectors, give us a unique market position. We have strong collaborative relationships and can complement our own specialist skills by drawing on a network of collaborators and associates.

We offer flexible and multi-disciplinary support, drawing on experience and expertise from across the firm. Whilst always providing a perspective that is rigorous and independent, we also work closely with our clients, recognising that they and their partners will be responsible for taking forward the analyses, strategies, and action plans that we have catalysed. Engagement is key to the way we work, as is our commitment to sharing and transferring knowledge and learning.

SQW Group

SQW Consulting is part of SQW Group. Other divisions include: SQW Asia, which provides consultancy services to government organisations in Hong Kong and China and foreign firms investing in China; SQW Energy, which provides consultancy services in energy and carbon management; and Oxford Innovation, which manages innovation centres and investment networks. For more information: www.sqwgroup.com.

Contact us

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