Probity in Planning Decisions and Planning Gain

Are your arrangements robust, transparent and accountable?

Why ask District Audit to review you planning arrangements?

Because:

- it’s a complex and controversial area – and we can help ensure your systems are transparent and accountable
- errors can result in damaging publicity and wasted resources – and we can help ensure your systems are robust enough to minimise mistakes

Following Nolan, District Audit’s study provided us with systematic and valuable help in preparing the Council’s local Planning Code of Probity

Martin Seddon
Environmental Planning and Development Control Manager
Wakefield MBC
Planning is one of the most contentious areas of local government. Decisions have a major impact on people’s lives, their environment, and the value of their land. To the public the decision-making process can appear bureaucratic and confusing. And while securing planning gain through granting permission provides an opportunity to benefit the community it should not be unduly influencing the final decision, or be seen to be. In such a sensitive area failure can lead to damaging publicity and cost you money.

**How can District Audit help?**

Our first step will be to carry out a risk assessment of your planning system to assess how transparent and robust your decision-making process is, how influence on decisions from third parties is managed, and to determine whether your arrangements for planning gain ensure community benefit within legislation.

At the end of the review we will have helped you:

- strengthen your decision making processes
- ensure that interests, hospitality and lobbying are managed properly
- examine the relationship between officers and members
- review the way you manage planning gain

**Why include this review in your audit plan?**

Because with the Government’s drive to raise ethical standards, you need to be confident that your planning arrangements are suitably robust and transparent.

Because our work with hundreds of local authorities means we can share examples of best practice.

Because our review was developed with the help of practitioners, including the Royal Town Planning Institute, a planning authority chairman, the local government Ombudsman, and the DETR.

**How do you find out more?**

Your Audit Manager will be happy to arrange for a specialist to discuss how this study could be applied to your authority.