

efficiency | quality | accountability

Best Value & Local Improvement: Reflections on Experience

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Scope

- The Scottish Approach to Best Value: An Appreciation
- The Audit in that Context
- Experience of an Audit
- The Impact: The Audit & Improvement
- End Points and Ways Forward

The Scottish Experience

- 1997 – 2003: Partnership in development
- The Bill & Act: Collaboration & refinement
- BV as the overarching duty: Continuous improvement
- Focus on outcomes: Improved services & use of resources: Governance
- Link to community planning & well-being
- World class legislation & process but
- Awareness of alternatives: Incentivisation

The Audit in that Context

- Cornerstone (not another brick in the wall)
- External challenge & stimulus to change
- Geared towards improvement
- Non-mechanical: Contrast CPA
- Capturing the subtlety of the Act

Experience of an Audit

- Use of ‘auditors’ with a policy & performance background
- Test against self assessment: Evidence & judgement
- The general & the specific
- Risk assessment: Preconception
- Audit or ‘imposed consultancy’: Improvement

Experience of an Audit

- Core report: Subtle, insightful, superb eye but...
- Editorialising: Intro & conclusions; AC report; press release
- Progressive abstraction: One-dimensional leads
- Balance of concerns: Corporate process priority services
- Challenge, damage, creativity & improvement

Impact

- Defensiveness, compliance & self-protection
- Leadership change: Loosened up attitudes: Rebuilding, but...
- Audit revisit & K.T.B.H.
- Forward planned change

Some Key Questions

- Could all conclusions be justified on strict audit model?
- If not, was 'imposed consultancy' model well managed?
- How specific can and should reports be?
- Did it bring about change & improvement?
- Could that have been achieved by other approaches?

End Points & Ways Forward

- Importance of maintaining complexity & tension: Quality in context
- Challenge & judgement are important but real engagement
- Audit & peer review fusion: Balance of skills
- Reporting & improvement outcomes: Duty of care
- Profiling & balance: Citizen interest
- Consultation now about next stage: Embedded practice; grading; services & outcomes