

WALBROOK HOUSING ASSOCIATION

- Walbrook HA was founded in 1966 as a charity.
- They provided a wide range of accommodation and associated services to over 12,000 people.
- Walbrook Group, the parent organisation, was a leading provider of housing and care services in Derbyshire and Staffordshire.
- They have now merged with Rushcliffe Housing Association to form the Ashridge Group, which is part of the Metropolitan Housing Trust.

What did our client need?

- Our client commissioned a review of 'back office' services and their operational contributions.
- In particular they wanted to look at efficiency and effectiveness, and the cost of support functions.
- We reviewed support functions and staffing resources in: **administrative & clerical support; health & safety; HR; facilities management; finance; insurance; IT; legal; PR; procurement; and quality & performance.**

How did we help?

- We interviewed the section heads of support functions to clarify their roles, activities, service delivery and relationships with operational heads.
- Through one-to-one meetings with senior operational managers we redefined the company's operational support requirements.
- We also benchmarked against comparable housing associations for arrangements and costs.
- We used questionnaires and an agreement to share results with participating organisations.



What challenges did we face?

- Improving support functions (some even seen as obstructive) to meet operational managers' needs.
- *We identified twenty-five problematic matters and discussed these in detail with the Chief Executive. We submitted fourteen recommendations to improve overall effectiveness and encouraged support staff to identify more closely overall performance.*
- Helping staff to see how their roles contribute to organisational success.
- *We used performance management, with a structure of appraisal and target-setting, improved communications and periodic market testing of certain functions.*

What benefits did our client gain?

- We objectively assessed current processes.
- We targeted problem areas, identifying and evaluating solutions.
- Our onsite presence made the project reassuringly open, making it easier to hold progress meetings.
- Staff-members accepted our 'neutrality' and welcomed the professional review as a chance to discuss issues and problems, and to identify improvements.

For more information on Strategic Review:

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