

## EAST MIDLANDS COUNCILS (EMC) PLANNING SUPPORT SERVICE (PSS)

### What is the Planning Support Service?

PSS is a way for planning authorities that are Members of EMC to access high quality, technical interim support at below market rates. PSS is **in addition** to the networking, information sharing and lobbying services that all EMC members receive for free as part of their subscription. EMC members also benefit from the recently launched low cost Continuing Personal Development networks for Planning & Environmental Health Officers.

### Why is EMC offering the PSS?

EMC exists to serve the needs of its member authorities. Planning authorities in the East Midlands are going through a significant period of change as a result of public spending cuts, reduction in income from planning fees and proposed changes to the planning system. EMC commissioned independent research to scope the particular challenges facing councils in the East Midlands and the kind of support that might be needed to meet them. This research, along with more informal discussions with individual local authority officers, has formed the basis of the PSS 'offer'.

### What can PSS deliver?

The starting principle is that PSS will deliver whatever interim technical support is needed by councils to fulfil their functions effectively. However, research commissioned by EMC indicates the following priority areas for councils:

- **Advice on major development and redevelopment proposals:** assessing the strategic implications of major employment parks, retail schemes, major closures, regeneration projects and urban extensions.
- **Renewable energy:** including advice on applications and support on the viability and implementation of renewable energy schemes.
- **Sustainability appraisal:** undertaking SA exercises for councils and commenting on SAs undertaken internally.
- **Infrastructure planning & provision:** viability assessments, advice on infrastructure plans and community infrastructure levies.
- **Examinations in Public:** advice on evidence preparation and negotiation.
- **Neighbourhood planning:** facilitation and advice, sourcing independent local EIP chairs.
- **Data collection and analysis:** advice and assistance on household and population projections, annual monitoring statements, SHLAs, SHMAAs and GTAAs. Undertaking survey work.

- **Cross-boundary co-ordination and mediation:** acting as an independent 'honest broker' on difficult strategic issues.
- **Procurement:** advice and contract management on behalf of individual and groups of authorities.
- **Interim Support:** filling existing roles on a short term or part time basis.

#### How does PSS work?

Once a member council has approached EMC with a request for support, EMC will produce a costed proposal detailing outcomes and the skills and qualifications of the recommended technical resource. This will be drawn from either the EMC secretariat, from another local authority, or from one of a number of highly qualified 'associate consultants' delivered through EMC. On acceptance of the proposal, a contract would be drawn up between the Council and EMC. EMC would manage any subcontracting arrangements.

#### How much does PSS cost?

Costs are flexible and subject to negotiation. For short term interim work, EMC would agree a day rate based on the nature of the task and the skills required. For longer term arrangements, a discounted fixed price contract may be more appropriate.

#### Does EMC offer any other similar services?

Yes. EMC has for a number of years run a similar service for HR support which has been highly valued by Councils. More recently, EMC has begun to provide technical support to housing authorities in Lincolnshire and also has the capacity to offer support to councils on economic issues, public relations and property. EMC is also working with OPUN to ensure that local authorities continue to have access to high quality design review services.

#### Can Councils who are not members of EMC access the PSS?

Yes, but they would have to pay a higher rate and priority will be given to authorities who are EMC members.

#### How can I find out more?

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