

MARK O'SULLIVAN MA MSc FCIPD

Contact details

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Summary

I have delivered policy advice, line management and major projects in senior roles in Government departments, local authorities and public bodies in London, the provinces, Scotland and overseas. I know the environment and educational worlds well, and am expert in managing support services and in efficiencies work. I am qualified in business psychology, HR & finance.

Career to date

→2005-date: *Resource Synergies: Director*: consultancy. Major tasks include management of national PRINCE2 project for succession planning for headteachers, design/management of top leadership development programmes for National Leaders of Education and for Directors of Children's Services, feasibility study for provincial rollout of accelerated school headship scheme. Other work includes exec. coaching, performance development, recruiting, organisational change & development, ERP implementation (SAP & Oracle), options appraisal, retention, cost reductions in Children's Services (£1m) and Culture/Sport (£0.5m), income opportunities, in-year forecasting tools.

Clients include Milton Keynes Council, HBS Business Systems, the National College for School Leadership, Institute of Payroll and Pensions Management, Integrated Resources Ltd, Future Leaders Ltd, Creasy Lockyer Ltd, Cambridgeshire YMCA.

Also *Association of Business Psychologists*: Part-time *pro bono* Management Board member and Director of Finance for UK and Ireland professional association. Introduction of budgetary system, and implementation of 2006 statutory accounting changes. Major communications and management initiatives, including revised Articles, and negotiation with government on statutory regulation proposals.

→2001-05: *Cambridgeshire County Council: Director of Resources, Environment & Transport*: devolved HR, finance, performance management, ICT and FM support for 400 people and a budget of £50m. Reporting to Deputy Chief Executive, Env't & Transport. This Department is cutting-edge, twice winning the award as Local Transport Authority of the Year, scoring excellent in the CPA, and effective in modernisation despite low tax and tight resourcing.

Outside the Council, member of the Infrastructure Partnership Steering Group, and alternate on Local Strategic Partnership. Regionally, vice-chairman of Finance Officers' Group, and member of Regional Assembly officer finance group for growth area work; nationally member of the County Surveyors' Society Finance Committee and of the CIPD Public Sector Forum Steering Committee.

Key achievements:

- Top team enhancement through streamlining of Board procedures and improved support
- Capacity building through package of resource-linked business plans, skills development, delegation and EFQM
- Implemented Oracle financials; £50m annual spend controlled to within 1% of plan; negotiated each year enough capital funding to deliver planned £20m+ programmes
- Sickness absence reduced by 30% between 2001 and 2005, increasing productivity; effective introduction of open-plan working, saving 20% in accommodation costs
- Improved PR profile and won IiP accreditation
- Drew up £2000m funding plan for Cambridge Growth Area; chaired Best Value Review on transport provision across services; regional initiative for automated lorry weight enforcement to cut highway maintenance spend

→1998-01: *Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions/DEFRA (Bristol): Head of International Conservation Policy Unit.* Managed UK membership of wildlife treaties; WTO implications of policy.

Key achievements:

- Led successful negotiations on new treaty on albatross conservation
- Negotiated successful reconfiguration of World Conservation Monitoring Centre to become part of UNO
- Elected leader of working group developing performance management indicators for the Convention on Migratory Species and its Secretariat.

→1997-98: *Scottish Office Personnel (Edinburgh): special project on new Scottish Executive structures, central policy co-ordination and management services, and manpower/skills to meet new accountability demands.*

Key achievements:

- Drew up report forecasting manpower needs (accurately, but contrary to conventional wisdom at the time)

→1995-97: *SO Education and Industry Department: Head of Pre-school Education Policy Team:* Highly controversial flagship voucher-funded nursery education project for 65,000 children, with budget rising to £70m: advice to Ministers, demanding policy formulation, handling and presentation, project and team management, liaison with hostile local authorities and other stakeholders, and practical implementation with HMI on quality coherence. In 1997, set up new arrangements in context of national childcare strategy and lifelong learning.

Key achievements:

- Devised scheme, persuading sceptical local authorities to participate and avoiding a pitfall with reception classes which did affect England
- Supported successful Parliamentary process, including giving evidence to Lords select committee
- Delivered voucher scheme successfully to time and budget

1997 (also): *Member of Scottish Office Web Steering Group.*

→1993-95: *SO Environment Department: Environmental project teams manager:*

- i) Head of Co-ordinating Unit on the oil spill in Shetland & team leader in Env't Protection Directorate

Key achievements:

- Scottish Office response to this high-profile event was well received
- Managed environmental assessment within £300k budget and published it on time

- ii) Deputy Leader, Forestry Review Team:

Key achievements:

- effective but complex strategic framework document and KPIs for new GB Forestry Agency

- iii) Leader of organisational planning team for new Scottish Environment Protection Agency:

Key achievements:

- forged effective team in difficult political climate;
- negotiated and devised options for organisational structures, employment relations proposals, budgeting and accounting systems, and an interim IT strategy for incoming Chief Executive

1993-1995 (also): *Member of Scottish Office Project Boards on new professional personnel function, and on NDPB sponsorship.*

→1992-93: *SO Education Department: Secondary school curriculum policy;* Policy on the future of the Highers; sponsorship of two NDPBs.

- 1991-92: *Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland: Director of Administration*: All finance, HR, corporate planning &c functions in a new NDPB with 350 staff and £18m budget; successfully handled major recruitment, and major financial crisis.
- 1990-91: *SO Finance Division*: Finance of industry & transport programmes.
- 1989-90: *Department of the Environment Property Services Agency: Head of Finance Division*: Controlled all PSA (20,000 staff) financial systems: funding, in-year control, audit &c. Managed PSA administration costs (£300 million annually).
- 1985-1989: *DOE PSA: Head of Defence Secretariat (Finance)*: Managed defence works finance (£2,000 million annually across 10 UK & 4 overseas regions): bidding process and negotiation with Treasury and MOD on financial provision; budget, forecasting, financial procedures. Outturn to within 1% on each occasion.
- 1980-1985: *DOE, Planning Land Use Policy Directorate*: Review of planning appeals process (Bristol). Later (London), Head of General Development Control Policy team.
- 1974-1980: *DOE (London & Manchester)*: Various fast stream trainee posts, including major Bill team, personnel and finance.

Non-executive directorships and trusteeships:

- Association of First Division Civil Servants: Executive Committee Member 1996-2001 (*chair of committee on structures and accountabilities 1997-98*)
- Cambridgeshire YMCA: Director 2002-05
- Association of Business Psychologists 2005-date: Treasurer (*redrafted Articles 2006; led work on statutory regulation 2007-08*)
- Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution 2005-09: Trustee (*Treasurer 2005-08 leading work on securing long-term maintenance funding and on improving financial control and VFM*)

Also on West of England Branch Committee, Benenden Healthcare Society; founder-chairman of a Bath residents association; representative on governing council of Federation of Bath Residents' Associations

Education, training & publications:

Higher education &c

Open scholarship to Peterhouse, Cambridge
Cambridge University MA: Classics & History (II(i)), 1974

Successful in civil service fast stream competition
London University Diploma in Social Anthropology (*prize*), 1985

London University MSc: Organisational Behaviour, 1993 (*distinction for dissertation "Effects of fixed-term contracts on employee performance"*)

Professional memberships &c

Director of Association of Business Psychologists
Fellow of Chartered Inst. of Personnel & Development; member of its Public Sector Forum Steering Group

Diploma in Finance & Accounting, Chartered Association of Certified Accountants

Registered as a psychometrician with the British Psychological Society

Counsellor (*Simpson House, Edinburgh*) w expertise in the organis'n & management of working groups (*Tavistock Inst., Inst. of Psycho-Analysis*)

Scientific Fellow of Zoological Society of London

Extensive CPD (eg NSG Developing Top Management Programme); regularly at CIPD annual conference; PRINCE2; Guardian Public Sector Summit 2008; LBS Global Leadership Summit 2009

Publications, conferences &c

Review of the Scottish Examination Board, Scottish Office, 1992

The Environmental Impact of the Wreck of the Braer (editor with Prof W Ritchie), Scottish Office, 1993

Retaining School Leaders (with Frank Hartle, Jacqueline Stein and Russell Hobby), National College for School Leadership, 2007

Sometime Member of Royal Anthropological Institute. Conf. papers on the anthropology of organisations, Cardiff 1990, performance effects of fixed-term contracts London 1994, history of management Nottingham 1995

Languages and other skills

Excellent Spanish; good French; fair German; some Welsh (CBAC Mynediad Certificate 2009). IT project and strategic management experience.

Personal interests

Arts etc; entertaining. Walking (includes Southern Upland Way, Demi-Tour du Mont Blanc, and Otter Trail in the Cape; often seen in the South Wales hills). Member of Bath Natural History Society. Fiction (publications: short story *Road Rage* in *Visible Ink Compiled*, ed A Potter, Pentalpha Publishing, Edinburgh, 1998; editor of *An Unknown Planet*, Park Corner Books, Warrington, 2008; novel *Britannia* recently completed).