

Curriculum Vitae – Keith Cooper

Director, Cooper Simms

CIPFA

Personal Details

Date of Birth - 28 August 1953

Nationality - British

Career Summary

Keith Cooper has over 25 years post qualification experience in public finance, including senior positions in local government, overseas government (Bermuda), urban development corporations and subsequently as a consultant. The last 18 years have been spent predominantly in the field of regeneration, gained initially from 5 years at the London Docklands Development Corporation, where he was Assistant Financial Controller, with his last 6 months spent as Acting Financial Controller and personal assistant to the Director of Finance.

Keith gained his appetite for regeneration at LDDC, where he was in charge of management accounting and the project management system. He helped negotiate the finances of Olympia and York's acquisition of Canary Wharf; the acquisition of the Royal Docks from the Port of London Authority; the establishment of Special Purpose Vehicles for financing the regeneration of Greenland Dock and the Docklands Light Railway, as well as assisting in the negotiation of the regimes for Corporation Tax and VAT on which subsequent regimes for English Partnerships and the RDAs were based. The culture and experience gained at LDDC in procuring and managing consultants encouraged Keith to venture into this field, initially as a sole trader (1990), and subsequently as a founder Director of Cooper Simms (1993).

Keith's career as a consultant has included associations with a number of established consultancy practices, including KPMG, BDO Stoy Hayward, David Lock Associates, GVA Grimley, E C Harris etc. As a senior financial and economic consultant Keith has advised Urban Development Corporations, City Challenges, SRB and Local Strategic Partnerships, English Partnerships and a number of Regional Development Agencies. He continues to undertake work with Cooper Simms and has recently been engaged as an Associate with Citex.

Experience and Skills

Keith has undertaken commissions on a range of regeneration projects for private, public and voluntary sector clients including the following:

- **Finance & Accounting** – Keith is familiar with company accounting requirements, including group consolidations. He has specified and procured internal/external audit appointments. Also experienced in the preparation, compilation and presentation of budgets and management information on performance at Board/Director level. Keith was Acting Finance Director at East Midlands Development Agency (Feb – Jun 1999).
- **Project Appraisal** Keith has extensive experience in option and financial appraisal of projects and project programmes; development appraisal for property projects; appraisal of contracts and consultancy appointments, including procurement; he has worked on a variety of publicly funded projects, both as a "gamekeeper" panel appraiser (3 UDCs, EP and currently, 2 RDAs) and also as "poacher" for private sector grant applicants e.g. British Gas, Blue Circle, Benny Gray of Custard Factory fame. Recent experience includes the appraisal and funding approval to over £50m of projects whilst on secondment as Strategic Property Advisor to Yorkshire Forward, including H M Treasury approval to one scheme in Goole;
- **Business planning** This has been "bread and butter" work throughout much of Keith's career. He has authored or contributed to numerous Corporate Plans, Action Plans, Delivery Plans as well as conventional business plans. Keith provided the input to the English Partnership's Corporate Plan for the Midlands on which the resource allocations for the nascent East and West Midlands RDAs was derived. He wrote 4 out of 5 Corporate Plans for the Plymouth Development Corporation, and was amongst the first to advise on hospital trust business planning (Nottingham City Hospital and Seacroft & Killingbeck Hospital in Leeds). Keith continues to author and advise on business plans, especially as these now form a critical part of ERDF funding;
- **Grants and funding** Keith has been intimately involved with many types of grant programme including City Grant, City Challenge [2 winning bids], SRB, ERDF [latest being £7m for a scheme in South Yorkshire], RSA and lottery bids. At last count, Keith had been personally instrumental in securing over £300m of funding for projects. Apart

from identifying the obvious financial parameters of projects, his strength lies in identifying issues of delivery and value for money, leading to projects being well designed and capable of implementation e.g. English Partnerships Area Investment Strategies for Nottingham, Derby and East Lindsey. Keith appeared as an expert witness on public grant funding at the Dover Local Plan Inquiry;

- **State Aid** – Keith is an expert on State Aid. At Yorkshire Forward he undertook research into State Aid compliant alternative interventions following the demise of PIP, and was then engaged to put theory into practice. He negotiated a complex JV with UK Coal for the development of 100 acres of former coal field; led discussions with senior EU officials in Brussels on a State Aid compliant Special Purpose Vehicle for infrastructure projects; and negotiated a JV agreement with Leeds City Council for the construction of the East Leeds Link Road with £7m of private sector contribution.
- **Evaluation** - evaluation of projects and programmes, including post-project review of EP projects for SWRDA.
- **Feasibility Studies** - Production of numerous feasibility studies, including Area Development Framework studies and Area Investment Strategies. Produced for English Partnerships studies on Nottingham, Walsall & Wolverhampton, Derby and East Lindsey.
- **Strategy and Policy** – Keith has advised numerous clients on strategy and policy issues. As a secondee to Yorkshire Forward, Keith advised the Environment Director on strategic property interventions; at Plymouth UDC he advised on the CPO strategy. Keith contributed to the research underpinning the Framework for the South West Regional Strategy, currently in train by the SWRA.
- **Organisational** - Reviews of organisation structures and preparation of underlying staffing plans. Also seconded into senior Management posts pending permanent recruitment (Plymouth DC, emda & Yorkshire Forward).
- **Procurement** - This includes contractors and consultancy services. Keith has frequently been involved in the appointment of panel consultants for clients including legal, surveying, architectural, engineering, quantity surveying and other disciplines associated with regeneration projects. He has procured computer systems and office equipment for various nascent organisations [Nottingham City Challenge, Plymouth and Birmingham Heartlands UDCs etc].
- **Computer Systems** - Advised on implementation of computer systems for administration (word

processing, fax etc), accounting, consultant and contractor's registers, and project programme monitoring systems. At Plymouth UDC specified and procured entire computer installation.

Keith's core skills and competencies include:

- A detailed understanding of all regeneration disciplines including planning, engineering, legal as well as financial, and the generation and delivery of mixed-use, joint-funded and partnership projects.
- An in-depth understanding of public finance and funding regimes, state aid, tax and accounting, appraisal and evaluation.
- The negotiation of projects including property acquisition, delivery mechanisms, and organisational requirements
- Extensive experience of all public programmes since IUAA; and delivery agencies such as UDCs, SRB, English Partnerships, Regional Development Agencies, Local Strategic Partnerships, local authorities and other government agencies.
- Experience of area based regeneration strategies, local economic studies, visioning and ability to focus on delivery.
- Delivery skills founded on detailed understanding of procurement methodology and development management skills.
- Flexible and creative approach to regeneration-based solutions.
- Presentation and communication skills

Keith has the following qualifications:

- Member, Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (admitted 1978)
- Member, British Institute of Management (1981-95)

Keith has been a Trustee of Studentforce, a midlands based charity placing graduates in regeneration projects as a stepping stone in their career development.

Keith speaks fluent French and basic Modern Greek.