

MINUTES

RA 49 06/07

Board BOARD FOR THE REGIONS

Date 23 January 2007

Venue Robert Street

Present

Mike Owen (Chair)	North West & North Wales Society
John Butler	Vice-President
Susan Curran	Chair, North West Society & North Wales Society
Ken Finch	Institute Council
Neil Hunter	Chairman, North East Region
Karen Kelly	Representing Chairman, CIPFA in Scotland
Andrew Lovett	Regional Representative, CIPFA South East
Mark McBride	Chairman, Northern Ireland
Leslie Milne	Chairman, Europe Branch and Regional Representative, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands & Europe
Stephen Purser	President, SWWE
Brian Roberts	Regional Representative, CIPFA in the Midlands
Keira Shepperson	Representing Chairman, Scottish Students' Society
Steven Watson	Chairman, CIPFA South East region

In attendance

Steve Freer	Chief Executive
Adrian Pulham	Director, Education and Training (Item 14)
Barry Mather	Assistant Director, Internal Services
Sarah Lawrence	Senior Website Developer (Item 15)
Alex Cenic	Regional and Volunteer Support Manager

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Black, Sandra Black, Lynn Brown, Jonathan Causton, George Clark, Jon Crockett, Ray Dolan, Carole Evans, Mike Evans, and Jeff Pipe.

3 MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The Chair thanked the outgoing Channel Islands President, Liz Middleton, for her contributions over a number of years and welcomed (in his absence) the new President, Ian Black, Treasurer of the States.
- 3.2 Members also received a report (RA32) on the selection of regional representatives on the Institute Council for 2007/8, term of office commencing at the national AGM in June 2007.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 31 OCTOBER 2006

The minutes of the last Board (Paper RA30) were approved as an accurate record.

5 ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING

- 5.1 Paper RA33 provided a list of Action Points arising from the last meeting; feedback on matters not covered by the agenda was given as follows –
 - 11. (minute 5.1) MO confirmed that he had met with the (outgoing) President of the Channel Islands Branch after the last meeting. He was optimistic that developments initiated by the outgoing officers together with the installation of a new top team would see the resurgence of branch activity in 2007.
 - 16. (minute 5.1) AC reported that though progress had been somewhat slower than anticipated the technical changes being made by the web developers were nearing completion. This additional resource would shortly be available to members and other regional council colleagues.
 - 17. (minute 6.2) AC reported that pending a decision about the nature of the presence of 'the regions' on the CIPFA stand a separate stand near (but not adjacent to) the CIPFA stand had been allocated to the regions. There was further discussion about this in the meeting with some members expressing the view that a separate 'regional' stand also had its advantages. The outcome of this discussion was that the secretariat should continue to look to secure a regional presence on the CIPFA stand for 2007 (reviewing the success of this approach at the July meeting). AC undertook to provide this year's hosts (SWWE) with details of the space available on the CIPFA stand.
 - 19. (minute 10.2.1) BM confirmed that the Institute remained committed to the decision to provide a 'Conference for the Regions underwrite' of 5K to protect host Regions from loss of income due to circumstances beyond their control (providing the allocation of financial responsibilities had been agreed in the early planning stages). CIPFA's financial regulations had however precluded the carrying over of the unused funds from 2006 – the funds if needed would have to be found from a central source.

6 DRAFT NOTES OF STRATEGIC DEBATE OF COUNCIL 14TH DECEMBER 2006

- 6.1 SF summarised the outcomes of the Council's strategic debate on (as set out in the extract from the Council minutes C21).

7 REVIEW OF REGIONAL STRUCTURES

- 7.1 The Board's work on 'maximising the performance of CIPFA's regions, branches and societies' formed part of the elements of the Governance Review recently instigated by the President. The Chief Executive opened discussion on this item by setting out the context both for this project and the wider Review. He outlined the reasons for its instigation, reminding members of the results of the last significant review of governance arrangements carried out in 2001/2 and the need to address new issues which had arisen since that review, and outlined the other areas of work which had been initiated. These included work on leadership roles in the Institute being led by Mike Barnes and work on maximising the work of technical panels for the Institute. The initiative being led by Mike Owen was seen as a parallel piece of work to that on panels. It was emphasised that the place of the Regions in CIPFA's structure was not in question – it was accepted that they were a huge source of strength – it was however important to consider whether current arrangements maximised the performance it was hoped could be achieved from Regions (e.g. the regional architecture of 'regions, branches, and societies' might not necessarily reflect current objectives).
- 7.2 The Board considered the process for the preparation of its report and the initial responses received to date (Paper RA34). The Chair thanked the 6 regions, branches and societies that had already responded to his letter of 19th December. The Board heard that responses from SWWE, CIM and CSE were in preparation and would arrive shortly. The Stage 2 consultation process was approved and Regions asked to liaise with the Secretariat regarding the Regional Council meetings to be attended by the Chair.
- 7.3 The Board also received two specific proposals 1) the business case and job description requested to support CSE's proposal for a pilot Programme Delivery Manager at its October meeting, and 2) a proposal to re-structure the North Eastern Region. There was considerable debate about the process for dealing with these proposals given their significance. The outcome of the discussion was however that it would be premature to make decisions on either proposal whilst the Board was engaged in a strategic review of regional structures. Whilst a number of members spoke in support of the proposals submitted it was recognised that responses had not yet been received from all regions on the issues which they sought to address. Such recommendations (and any related proposals) needed to emerge in a co-ordinated fashion beginning with a consideration of the role of the Regions and going on to the infrastructure needed to support it (both centrally and regionally).
- 7.4 The Board further took the view that there was a need for a Council input into this debate. It was agreed to make a bid for a strategic discussion at Council at its April meeting on the role of the Regions. If such a request was approved the key dates for the conclusion of the various stages of work on this project would be:
- 22 February – Request for Strategic Debate to Management Committee
 - 21 March – Governance Review Panel (Board paper needed)
 - 5 April – Paper to Council/Strategic Debate at Council (as above)
 - 24 April – Board considers and confirms its Review report
 - 24 May – Council considers Review recommendations (including CSE pilot and NE re-structuring proposal)

8 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2006 TO 2010

- 8.1 The Board received an update report on the implementation of the new Strategy (RA36) setting out the latest available information on the Development Strategy initiatives and those responsible for their actualisation. A detailed report from the Assistant Director, Corporate Communications on progress with Development strategy initiative 1.13 - about improving relationship management arrangements and communications with CIPFA employers - was also tabled.
- 8.2 The Board received an update (RA37) on the work undertaken on the first stage of the Action Plan for initiative 1.4. The work to date had largely focused on evidencing current levels of low cost local provision but the paper also outlined a number of ways forward for the Board's consideration. The underlying thrust was to find ways of pulling together expertise from across the CIPFA Group to support the Regions extend their CPD offer via a core programme of events. Such an approach reflected that of other professional bodies such as the AAT and CIMA.
- 8.3 The Board welcomed the direction of travel outlined in the paper and asked the Secretariat to develop detailed proposals for consideration.
- 8.4 It was agreed that a small sub-group of the Board should be convened to work with the Secretariat to produce fully costed proposals for the Board's consideration at its next meeting. Susan Curran was the only volunteer in the meeting but the Chair asked all Regions to nominate representatives outside the meeting.

9 REGIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 9.1 It was agreed that Paper RA38 (a template for collecting information for the indicators agreed at the last meeting) should be deferred to the next meeting. NH reported that the Board's Performance Indicators sub group would circulate this information to members as soon as it had concluded its discussions.

10 CONFERENCE FOR THE REGIONS

- 10.1 The initial feedback (RA39) and ensuing discussion on the future of the Conference for the Regions revealed some common themes including the increasing problems volunteers were having getting release from employment to attend and the consequent need to ensure that the outcomes of the event were clearly relevant to all. Both written responses also made the point that there was scope to achieve the majority of the objectives of the Conference by utilising other arrangements e.g. as a subsidiary event attached to the main annual conference. Members agreed that this had a number of advantages. One of the disadvantages identified however was the loss of the opportunity for the Conference to travel around the Regions as the Annual Conference needed to be located where attendance could be maximised. The point was however made that ease/cheapness of travel to such locations might counter-balance some of the disadvantages.

10.2 It was agreed that a number of messages needed to be relayed to the planning team for 2007, chief amongst them that the conference needed to be a 'working conference' with demonstrable outcomes and a forum for sharing best practice. The programme needed to include opportunities to discuss emerging issues (with appropriate input from CIPFA centrally) as well as reflect on good practice (the role of the Board, the role of development planning) and discuss issues emerging from Development Plans. It was agreed that the best way to discuss key issues was through workshops though there was scope for some interactive sessions if appropriate to the theme. The website workshop would again be a feature of the programme and the CPD Manager had also requested an opportunity to run a workshop. It was suggested that workshops needed to be longer than they had been in 2006. SL also made an appeal for the presentation of Website Awards to take place on the same day as the web workshop.

10.3 Members also received an update (RA40) from the Republic of Ireland branch regarding preparations for this year's conference. The Board's attention was drawn to the host Region's branch urgent need for information about numbers attending; Regional Chairs were urged to provide the Secretariat with indicative numbers as soon as possible after the meeting. Regions were also asked to ensure that appropriate regional volunteers were able to attend i.e. if Website and CPD Workshops were to take place both Website Co-ordinators and Regional CPD Advisers needed to be encouraged to attend.

11 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS 2008

11.1 Members received an outline timetable (RA41) which placed the Development Planning process in the context of the Institute's budget setting and committee timetable.

11.2 Whilst it was recognised that the current timetable for the submission of Plans (i.e. the Board's July meeting) was not ideal for all regions it was agreed that the reasons for retaining the current timetable still outweighed those for changing it. It was important that the Board was aware of key issues and any likely demands on the Development Fund and/or the wider contingency fund as early as possible so that these could be built into the business planning/budget setting process and preparations for the regional conference.

11.3 Regions unable (due to the cycle of their Regional Council meetings) to submit full draft Plans by the July meeting were asked to identify key issues and priorities so that the Board could at least build these into its discussions.

12 DEVELOPMENT FUND

12.1 SC reported that the North West and North Wales Society's report on the 'Employer Engagement' project supported by the fund last year would be circulated to members with the minutes of the meeting.

12.2 It was agreed to defer making any decision about the unallocated portion of the fund till the next meeting when the outcomes of the review would be known.

13 BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 13.1 The Board's fourth quarter report (Paper RA44) was approved for presentation to Management Committee.
- 13.2 The template for 2007 (Paper RA45) was approved in outline subject to some further streamlining by the Secretariat.
- 13.3 It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate this year's guidelines for the production of annual reports with the minutes of the meeting. There had, at earlier meetings, been some discussion about a more fundamental review of the reporting and planning framework provided to Regions, but given the level of consistency now achieved and the discussions in train around the review it was agreed that the current approach be retained.

14 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 14.1 The Director of Education and Training outlined the key themes he was currently addressing with colleagues in the Directorate and the projects in progress e.g. the development of a 'qualifications framework' to show the progression between qualifications and how they interrelate, the development of a 'blended learning model' for content delivery to provide a more learner centred and interactive approach, and the associated changes to the Education and Training infrastructure to support this.
- 14.2 The Board's attention was also drawn to the 16 March deadline for the submission of nominations for the Tom Sowerby Award 2007. Regions were asked to identify suitable individuals from their region to be nominated for the Award.
- 14.3 Members again commended the very encouraging developments in the Education and Training Directorate.

15 REGIONAL WEBSITES AND WEBSITE OF THE YEAR AWARD

- 15.1 SL summarised Paper RA47, which updated the Board on progress on the Regional websites and provided project updates from the 2005 and 2006 winners.
- 15.2 The revised criteria put together by the Board's sub group were approved for use for this year's website awards – 'best website' and 'most improved'. The £2500 previously allocated to award winners would now be made available to all regions as a bidding pot for website development. Members identified a need to review the suitability of the existing criteria when they returned to look at Development Bids later in the year.
- 15.3 NH queried whether the idea of an award could be extended to other key areas of regional work e.g. (Regional Event of the Year, Event Programme of the Year etc) The Secretariat undertook to investigate further and report back to a later meeting.
- 15.4 The Senior Website Developer expressed her disappointment at the lack of updating being done to some sites.

15.5 Members noted that this was likely to be SL's last meeting ahead of her going on maternity leave in the Spring. The Board thanked SL for her excellent contribution and looked forward to welcoming her back soon. Details of the member of staff temporarily taking over responsibility for regional and volunteer websites would be circulated as soon as possible.

16 NATIONAL STUDENTS FORUM

16.1 Paper RA48, the update of the National Student Forum's activities, was noted with interest.

16.2 Stephen Purser, the Board's representative on the NSF, asked members to notify him if there were any areas where they wanted further information or issues they wished to see raised at meetings.

17 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 24 April 2007

Tuesday 3 July 2007

18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18.1 There was none.