

CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch
WEBSITE STRATEGY

1. Introduction

The CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch aims to support CIPFA's position as the leading accountancy body for public services by informing and debating policy-making at national and local level. It will also act as a community of interest in order to facilitate networking opportunities for Branch members to share ideas and achievements, to help spread best practice, and to promote and support regional events.

In order to achieve these aims, the CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch objectives are to:

- 1.1. Hold meetings and conferences for the discussion of matters relating to CIPFA and matters appertaining to the interests of members as professional accountants in the public service.
- 1.2. Exchange experience and information among members and others relating to public finance and accountancy.
- 1.3. Promote Continuing Professional Development for CIPFA members.
- 1.4. Arrange meetings of Branch sections and groups to stimulate interest in matters relating to public finance and accountancy in all parts of the public sector.
- 1.5. Provide facilities and activities to meet the needs of registered students and trainee accounting technicians.

Good communication is important for achieving these aims and objectives. The Branch website is a clear part of the overall communication strategy.

2. Guiding Principles

The Branch's Website Strategy is founded on the following guiding principles:

- 2.1. Communication processes that are known and transparent.
- 2.2. Communication that is purposeful and timely, particularly in relation to consultation and decision-making.
- 2.3. Communication that is open, honest and frank, and only in exceptional cases (for example, to preserve confidentiality) is it not made available.
- 2.4. Effective communication in a medium that is easy to access, easy to use, is robust and reliable.

- 2.5. Improvements in communication that are for the benefit of the Branch members and students.
- 2.6. Decision-making and organisational structures that support effective communication by, for example, ensuring clear accountability for outcomes.

3. Key Aims of the Website Strategy

The Website Strategy supports the aims and objectives of the CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch, promotes the activities that it organises, and assists the efficient running of the region. The key aims of the Website Strategy are to:

- 3.1. Promote CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch and its activities in a coherent way.
- 3.2. Improve communication between CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch and those with whom it has contact.
- 3.3. Make it easy for people to find out about Branch services and events.
- 3.4. Establish contact networks for use by members and students.
- 3.5. Regularly publicise members' and students' views and opinions, where appropriate.
- 3.6. Make effective use of the technology provided.
- 3.7. Maintain and improve the perception of the Branch's website as one that is well maintained and supported.

4. Key Performance Indicators

- 4.1. To measure the success of the website a number of key performance indicators will be developed, linked to each aim, and their evaluation published on the website.
- 4.2. Data detailing user activity ("hit indicators") provided by CIPFA monthly and will be published on the website:
 - The number of times the website is visited or "hit".
 - The number of hits per page.
 - The number of times a document is downloaded.
 - The change in number of hits on the website over time.
 - The percentage of hits on the Northern Ireland Branch website compared to CIPFA regions of comparable size and membership:
 - Total hits
 - Average hits per page
 - Average hits per member
 - Other page hits to the branch homepage.

- 4.3. Periodic surveys of members and students within the Northern Ireland region will be conducted and the results published on the website. The surveys will test the level of user satisfaction, the effectiveness of the website as a communication tool, and outcomes in the operation of the website in relation to:
- usability
 - relevance
 - content provision.

5. Key methods used to deliver the Strategic Aims

CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch Committee support: The website aims to capture all relevant news, events and information generated from CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch activities. The Branch Committee aims to keep the website sub-group informed of any relevant items for inclusion on the website. The Branch Committee will include communication matters and website statistics as an item on its agenda.

Content: The Branch Committee will retain responsibility for editorial control of content, and will aim to ensure that the content of the website is regularly updated through information received from the Institute, Branch members and students, and CIPFA in Northern Ireland. The homepage content should be updated monthly; and the image on the homepage changed periodically.

Website sub-group and volunteers: The Branch will use a website sub-group and volunteers to update the website. Appropriate training and support will be offered to sub-group members and volunteers.

CIPFA support: The Branch website volunteers, through the website sub-group, will have regular contact with CIPFA's Senior Website Development Officer. Through this contact, the website will continue to be developed in order to ensure compliance with Institute and legislative requirements as well as developments in communication strategies and methodologies.

Secure area for Committee members: Branch Committee members will have access to a password protected secure area, where key documents are held.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): the website aims to provide information to Branch members on CPD, including links to CIPFA's main CPD site.

Students: the website aims to provide content and information or links relevant to students. The Branch aims actively to encourage the involvement of students in the development of the website.

Events: the website contains details of forthcoming events and the facility to request a booking form. Handouts and presentations from events will also be held on the website.

The Account: A PDF version of the current and previous versions of the regional newsletter *The Account* will be made available for download on the website.

Feedback and suggestions: the website will contain the facility for users to supply feedback or to offer suggestions for improvements on a web-based form.

6. Proposed website developments for 2006

- 6.1. Redesign of the CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch website in line with changes to CIPFA's corporate identity whilst retaining a Northern Ireland regional identity.
- 6.2. Establishment of the protocol by which content will be generated, approved by the Committee and applied to the Branch website in a timely manner.
- 6.3. Update Branch contacts' details.
- 6.4. Data cleansing of out-of-date documents available for downloads.
- 6.5. Promote greater use of e-mail to communicate with Branch members and students and to provide them with links to new information or key content on the website.
- 6.6. Develop a support network with the web development team in CIPFA at Robert Street, with the staff of the CIPFA in Northern Ireland office, and with website volunteer teams in other CIPFA regions.
- 6.7. Develop and maintain a knowledge base for use in training website volunteers and to transfer knowledge to new volunteers.

7. Periodic and regular review of the Website Strategy

- 7.1. The publish date of this strategy document is 12 December 2005.
- 7.2. The Website Strategy will be reviewed at least once annually at a time determined by the CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch Committee to ensure that the website strategy:
 - continues to deliver the aims and objectives as set out in Part 1 of this Website Strategy document; and
 - remains aligned with the current CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch Development Plan.