**Presidents Annual Report 2016**

**Introduction**

I would like to take this opportunity to outline what the region has been up to in the last 12 months and to look forward to how we can better support our members in the future.

Our strategic priorities for the branch are:

1. We will provide **great services** to our members through an interesting and varied series of professional events and social events.

2. We will model as a regional institute the **increased collaboration** that our members need to undertake in their day to day professional roles.

3. We will **increase our influence** both regionally and nationally with local employers, regional and national bodies and the wider profession.

4. We will **support our students** in the region by continuing to explore options with CIPFA nationally to deliver an improved offering.

**2016 – So what did we do?**

In line with our strategic priorities we delivered a programme of high quality events in response to members’ requirements.

The highlights were:

* *Professional Update day*

About 40 delegates gathered in Durham City for a professional update event titled 'Grow Your Professional Development'. The purpose of the day was to explore some of the critical facets of working in the public services.

Martin Cresswell, Chief Executive of iMPOWER, kicked off with a first session on demand management - how much demand for public services is avoidable? The public's behaviour can either increase or reduce the effectiveness of public spending. But organisations can influence public behaviour by tools such as Nudge factors. All budget lines are in scope for savings – but must first be viewed through a 'demand opportunity' lens. Gavin Barker of Mazars discussed commercialisation as alternative models of service delivery. The drive for commercialisation in local government was a response to austerity. He noted that the public sector already has many of the commercial skills required to deliver change and efficiency.

After a coffee break, Ian Railton and his team from Verandern led a session on the emotions of change. Change leadership is needed in public sector. We need true transformation not incrementalism. But change is hard. They took the assembled delegates through a practical change management exercise, transforming us into a gospel choir in half an hour, despite many delegates' reservations at the start about the idea of singing in public at all.

*Annual Dinner2016*

Over 90 CIPFA members and guests attended this year’s annual dinner, held at the Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Among the guests were members from ACCA, CIMA, and the AAT, as well as our CIPFA Colleagues from the Yorkshire and Humber Region. We also welcomed CIPFA National President John Matheson who gave the pre-dinner address. . It was also encouraging to see strong representation from CIPFA students, currently pursuing their qualification with Newcastle and Gateshead Councils respectively and to welcome Carol Brown into the Institute as a full member

It was also an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of two retiring members of the regional executive committee members, David Young and George Clark. David has been instrumental in the promotion of CIPFA with health, and the development of HFMA and CIPFA links, and while George’s involvement over the past two and a half decades is the stuff of legends, with the Weekend School, Committee for the Regions and the establishment of the Sixth Form Management Games just some of his achievements. The national President paid his own personal tribute to both David Young and George Clark, thanking them for their contribution to the institute and the wider public service.

The Region would also like to express its gratitude to Sellick Partnership, ENGIE and Mazars for their support of the event and their generous sponsorship which was key to the success of the evening.

All guests contributed generously to a charity raffle that raised £555, divided between the Teenage Cancer Trust and the Stroke Association.

*North East Accountancy Awards 2016*

2016 was the tenth anniversary of the annual North East Accountancy Awards ceremony, held at the Hilton Hotel in Gateshead. The event is a fantastic opportunity to raise the profile of CIPFA, and a great way to reward outstanding effort made in public finance. Overall there were four CIPFA members on judging panels, and four out of 13 awards were presented by CIPFA members.

CIPFA in the North East sponsored the Public Services Team of the Year award which was won by the National Audit Office. Other notable winners from public services were; Naz Jabeen and Ashleigh Jackson both from the National Audit Office, and Paul Woods picking up the Outstanding Achievement award.

*CIPFA North East Golf Day*

Held at Brancepeth Castle Golf Club, 11 players of varying golf abilities seemed to enjoy the challenging course. The winners of the team event were; David Smith, Jon Winfield and Jonathon Blackley representing EY. The main competition, for the Lady Lambert Trophy was retained for a second year by Campbell Dearden winning on count back from Jon Winfield.

Thanks must go to sponsorship and support from: EY, PWC and particularly Andrea Binks (Virtual PA) for organising the whole event

*Impact of Brexit on Public Services*

Gareth Davies of Mazars shared his thoughts on the impact of Brexit with delegates from across the region at a special evening event at Gateshead Council. This was our first evening event for a while and attracted around 30 people. Although the event was held not long after the Brexit vote, Gareth talked us through a variety of challenges and things to think about, and the session was concluded by a dynamic discussion amongst delegates

*Student Drinks Evening*

To improve our support of students in the region and to get some useful feedback on things that concern them the region hosted an evening for all students in the region, where they could meet members of the Executive team and network with each other. This was particularly useful for raising concerns around training and CIPFA support nationally. We now have regular student membership on the Executive committee.

*Sixth Annual Regional Conference*

CIPFA members from across the region and elsewhere gathered at The Sage, Gateshead, for the CIPFA in the North East Annual Regional Conference on the theme of Commercialisation and Collaboration'.

Chaired by Sir Tony Redmond, Past President of CIPFA, he introduced the day by stating that the public sector is reaching the limits of efficiency savings. The status quo is being challenged; there needs to be an end of a silo mentality.

We had a range of eminent speakers that included Andrew Burns, CIPFA Vice President, on his first visit to Newcastle since the FA Cup in 1974! He asked whether the British public were expecting Scandinavian-level public services whilst only paying American-level taxes.

Richard Harrison from CIPFA spoke about the commercial approach to providing public services. Ian Cosh from Lancashire Constabulary, outlined some of the initiatives that he was involved in around financing policing using a collaborative approach. Jon Walker from Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums Service spoke about The Entrepreneurial Museum, and how to manage reductions in funding from local councils. Louise Kempton of CURDS Newcastle spoke about the issues, principles and practice of decentralisation; she concluded that ironically, we need the centre to take the lead on decentralisation in our currently highly centralised nation.

Rob Whiteman, Chief Executive of CIPFA, talked about the forecast for public sector finance. He did a whistle-stop tour of the changes since he was with us last year. His advice to all public sector bodies was to not be over-optimistic on public finances. Maxine Hewitt-Smith, Director of Finance at South Tees Hospitals and Chief Finance Officer of the local STP spoke about sustainability and transformation planning in the NHS. She looked at the STP through the prism of four fictional patient journeys.

The conference then broke into a panel session featuring the speakers, with the audience asking questions about the key issues from the presentations. Thanks must go to sponsorship from Sellick Partnership and EY.

*Faster close breakfast meeting*

Supported by EY and Paul Sheffield from BT South Tyneside, 30 CIPFA members from across the region attended a breakfast meeting on faster close of accounts.

Raman Sanghera from EY spoke about EY & CIPFA's initiative to support faster close and Paul talked about his experience of a dry run for faster close of accounts at South Tyneside Council.

I have tried, above, to give a brief flavour of the events we have ran during the year and I would recommend reading the reports on the website for further details.

**2016 Survey Results**

In 2016 CIPFA nationally undertook a survey of members and compared the results to a similar survey in 2013. Some of the results have been split down by region and I would like to highlight areas that apply to the North East region.

Overall member satisfaction with CIPFA has been increasing and in the North East it has increased from 60% to 74% of respondents which reflects what I believe to be our determination to provide a regional focus for members. In fact, regional engagement support received measures, in the North East, are the highest of all CIPFA regions at 57% and 51% respectively. However we cannot rest on our laurels here as the percentage of members who feel we engage well has fallen slightly to 64%.

While improving how well we are perceived to respond to members at 46% there is still room for improvement. We have definitely improved our offering to members with 32% of members attending an event in 2015, but 48% planning to in 2016.

I believe these survey results show that we are on the right track and compared to other regions are doing well. But there is still much room for improvement and that is where our development plan will make a difference.

**2017 and Beyond**

Currently we have 652 members in the region, including 79 students and 435 full members. It is important that we respond positively to their needs as well as championing CIPFA to new members. At the last Regional Forum the message our region took away was a need to reshape the Executive committee, reshape our plan and delegate appropriately.

Our ambition is to be the best region within the CIPFA family by building on our strengths and helping members recognise the value of being a CIPFA member. Our ambition is to increase member satisfaction within the region from 64% to above 70% by 2018. We will do this by;

- Supporting our members, students and employers,

- Growing our membership and networks,

- Further developing our offer of high quality events, providing a flexible programme of events that cover social as well as professional updates.

We have plans to improve our communications with members by developing a network of champions throughout the region for each sector and continue our use of social media. We will support our newly established student network by offering free places to events and putting on events aimed specifically at students. Engagement with employers is key to this plan and we will facilitate discussions with employers and CIPFA nationally particularly around apprenticeships. We will continue to support the CIPFA brand and work with employers and other accountancy bodies to maintain our high profile in the region. In order to ensure we have the resources to deliver this plan we are developing a new sponsorship model that will ensure the region can deliver on its promises.

To deliver these plans we will need to increase the number of active volunteers in the region and I would call upon all members to come forward and offer whatever skills you have to help make this the best region within the CIPFA family. This is a good way to broaden your network, enhance your CPD and doesn’t involve a significant commitment.

**Acknowledgements**

As this is my final year as President I would like to record my sincere thanks to all who have supported me throughout my term of office. I count myself very fortunate to have dedicated and talented colleagues on the Executive Committee. It is worth repeating that the events programme would not be as successful without their enthusiasm, hard work and diligence.

I would also like to thanks the sponsors for their continued support and I hope they will support us in the future to deliver our plans. As I hand over the chain of office to my successor who will be agreed at the AGM I know that we are a region that is strong and getting stronger. Due to the dedication of Peter Sullivan, our website and social media lead, there are numerous ways to contact us, so please do so through any of the following routes and make our region something to be proud of.

www.cipfa.org/regions/north-east northeast@cipfa.org

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**Clive Johnson, FCPFA**

**President – CIPFA North East**

**March 2017**