

minutes

Paper C 64 09/10

Committee	Council
Date	27 May 2010
Venue	Robert Street
Present	Roger Latham (President) Tony Redmond (Treasurer) Jaki Meekings Davis (Vice-President) Caroline Mawhood (Past President)
	Caroline Al-Beyerty Karen Kelly Ken Barnes Helen Kilpatrick Brian Berry David McBride Chris Bilsland Ian Perkin Jane Cuthbertson Jeff Pipe Tim Day Jon Pittam Alan Edwards Steve Purser Nathan Elvery Jaki Salisbury Ken Finch Trevor Salmon Alan Geddes Martin Sinclair Nigel Hiller Natalie Slayman-Broom Suzanne Jones Lee Yale-Helms

Minutes of the Open Session

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Rachel Banfield, Paul Breckell, Chris Donnelly, Claire Gravil, Richard Harbord, Curtis Juman, John Matheson, Carole Mills-Evans. Mike Owen, Judith Savage, Alison Sweeting and Steve Watson.

2 Declarations of Interest

Jane Cuthbertson declared an interest in the BL 4 admissions paper.

3 Minutes of Last meeting

The minutes of the Open Session of the meeting held on 15 April 2010 were agreed as accurate.

4 Matters Arising

There were none.

5 Council Election results

Paper C54 was noted. Responding to comments, the Chief Executive confirmed that Regional Representatives were nominated and elected within their regions then formally coopted onto Council; and the President noted that it remained the long-term aim of the Nominations Committee to increase the voter turnout in elections.

6 Nominations Committee

Paper C55 contained a recommendation that the new chair should be John Butler, and this was approved by Council.

7 CIPFA Wales Region

Lee Yale-Helms, the NWNW Regional representative summarised paper C56, being a proposal from the Board for the Regions for a consultation and ballot on the formation of a CIPFA Wales Region, and members representing the other two regions affected endorsed the rationale and way forward being proposed. The President confirmed that the recent AGMs of those regions had all accepted the rationale. Council unanimously approved the proposal in the paper.

8 Annual Conference

The Director of Marketing & Corporate Communications summarised paper C57, and reported that currently delegate numbers were on target. The attendance of international speakers still was a risk due to the Icelandic ash situation, and he awaited confirmations from newly-appointed government ministers as to whether they would attend. He confirmed that the various matters being launched at Conference would be more-widely promoted in parallel, and he would advise regions on how they could contribute to that. A member repeated concerns about Harrogate as a location, which in central government at least meant that few members would be attending; indeed, there was a ban on flights within central government. The director confirmed, in response to a comment, that the Sage Centre had been researched and found not to be of an adequate size for our conference. A member asked whether the AGM proceedings could be filmed or web-cast for wider dissemination; responding the Council Secretary said a DVD was normally made but primarily for accuracy of minuting the proceedings, and the President wondered whether there would be sufficient interest to justify the expense of web-casting.

9 Strategic debate

The Director of Marketing & Corporate Communications gave a presentation on the Coalition Government's spending plans, and the current policy and legislative overview. The director illustrated the differences in approach to public spending set out by the three main parties during the election campaigns. He said the permanent hit to public finances from the financial crisis was estimated by the Treasury in the March 2010 Budget to be £69 billion a year, speculating that the OBR judgement in June could be different. The Coalition Government said it would accelerate the reduction of the structural deficit over the course of a Parliament, he highlighted.

The director mapped out the details of £6.243 billion spending cuts for 2010-11 announced by the Coalition Government. He explained that cuts would be made to non-frontline services and back-office functions across central government departments as well as to local government grants.

The director described the work that CIPFA has done to lobby for sound public financial management and good governance. He also described the work CIPFA has done to encourage public sector organisations to think ahead and plan for a significant reduction in public spending and to think creatively about the levers, tools and techniques that the public services should be deploying to protect front-line services. Finally, the director gave an overview of the public sector reforms in the Government's coalition document.

Council members then divided into groups to discuss whether all the relevant policy developments had been covered and what the most important policy areas are for CIPFA. The conclusions from the discussions are as follows.

CIPFA must be bolder in its external communications, seeking out opportunities to raise its profile. The volume of work will be large. Some of it work could be decentralised to CIPFA's panels and members should also be encouraged to network.

CIPFA should consider the impact the Coalition Government's policies will have on members, particularly those whose jobs are at risk. CIPFA should use volunteers to mentor them to understand that a job change is not necessarily a problem and they should not rule out moving into the private sector, especially companies providing services to the public sector. CIPFA must encourage those working in the public sector to innovate.

In terms of areas of focus, much of government activity takes a scattergun approach, and CIPFA should lobby for a broader strategy. CIPFA should lobby for deregulation and for a reduction in bureaucracy to simplify the relationship between local and central government. Where regulation is needed, CIPFA should encourage a focus on VFM. CIPFA must emphasise the importance of a professional approach amongst the public sector finance profession and that the organisation's attitude and position should be supportive and positive about change. CIPFA should continue to strengthen the role of CFO. Finally, CIPFA must feed into the spending review process and identify consequences of spending decision. However, CIPFA should consider carefully how it comments especially on public sector pay and pensions, and the local government finance review.

CIPFA should focus on the commercial opportunities the Government's policies bring, such as shared services and benchmarking services. Further, strengthening of existing messages about collaboration and shared services is essential for CIPFA's success.

10 Any Other Business

There was none; the President formally closed the Open Session of the meeting.