38th CPA BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN REGION (BIMR) ANNUAL CONFERENCE: Sunday 10 to Wednesday 13 June 2012

1. The purpose of this paper is to update Members of the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) on progress in taking forward the BIMR Annual Conference. Members are asked to:

- Confirm that they are content with the proposed dates of Sunday 10 to Wednesday 13 June 2012;
- Agree a theme for the Conference. Initial suggestions are at Annex A;
- Suggest possible key speakers for the plenary sessions and workshops;
- Discuss and agree the format and venues for the Conference. A draft programme is attached at Annex B for consideration;
- Consider whether or not any provision should be made for spouses;
- Agree that transport should not be provided for delegates who require transfers to and from the airport, and
- Consider whether or not to provide a cultural day programme on Thursday 14 June and if so, whether or not delegates should be asked to pay a fee to cover the costs for the cultural day programme.

2. The BIMR Annual Conference is an annual event in the CPA calendar. Each year one of the Branches within the region hosts the Conference. CPA Scotland Branch hosted the Conference in Edinburgh in 2001 and will host again in June 2012.

3. The following legislatures are Members of the BIMR: Alderney and Sark; Cyprus; Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; Guernsey; Isle of Man; Jersey; Malta; Northern Ireland; Scotland, UK (Westminster) and Wales.

4. It is expected that each Branch will be invited to send 4 delegates and a Secretary, which would mean hosting around 60 delegates. This number may increase if arrangements are made to invite regional representatives. Delegates will be accommodated in the MacDonald Holyrood Hotel. Sixty rooms have already been reserved.

Points for discussion

a) The dates of the Conference have been slightly changed to ensure that if any changes to parliamentary business arise as a result of possible reforms to sitting patterns, this will not impact on the Conference programme.
b) Venues outwith the Scottish Parliament will be confirmed in due course. It is likely that hospitality will be offered to delegates by local authorities and/or the Scottish Government.

c) The Branch Secretariat has commissioned a dedicated Conference website to enable delegates to obtain information on-line and to register on-line. It is expected that the website will be operational by January 2012.

d) At least one of the sessions should involve an EU perspective. This is a standing requirement at BIMR Conferences, requested by Malta and Cyprus in 2004.

e) Gender issues are also required to be mainstreamed into the Conference programme.

f) Since 2003, Members of CPASB have had a tendency to speak out against spouses’ programmes, non-business focussed conferences, cultural days and lengthy conferences.

g) The Special Envoy seemed keen to participate in the Conference programme if a suitable role could be found.

Recommendation

5. We recommend that the format and quality of the Conference should be similar to the Conference on the Global Financial Crisis hosted by Guernsey Branch in 2009. This Conference was business focussed, well planned and structured. Expert speakers on the theme chosen and senior officials from the UK provided opinions and facts from different perspectives. It’s also important to be relevant to the issues of the day for parliamentarians attending and the Guernsey conference theme certainly hit the zeitgeist mood of that time.

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