CPA forward programme of activity and finance – regular update

1. The purpose of this paper is to:

   • provide a draft forward programme of activity for the period 2011 to 2014.
   • provide an update and breakdown on the Branch finances.

Forward programme

2. Members of the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) are requested to:

   a) Consider the activities which are set out in Annex A and decide which activities should be taken forward.
   b) Consider and agree that a minimum sum of £5,000 should be given up this financial year in order to meet the corporate targets on budget savings.
   c) Consider if it might be possible to surrender a further £10,000 this financial year provided no further activity is identified.
   d) Agree that 2 Members should attend the CPA Annual Conference each year.
   e) Agree that the Secretary of Scotland Branch may participate in the rota with the other devolved legislatures within the UK to provide secretariat support to all 3 delegations from the devolved Branches on a three yearly cycle.
   f) Agree that 4 Members and one official should attend the British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Annual conferences.
   g) Agree that CPA Scotland Branch should consider invitations to attend other CPA conferences and seminars providing there are resources available.
   h) Agree to ring-fence £6,000 per annum to support the CPA Scotland Branch Internship Programme, during the 3 year lifetime of our TAP2 project with the National Assembly of Malawi. To also decide whether or not an approach should be made to the CPA to make a contribution to the internship costs.
   i) Agree to plan to allow 2 members involved in the Parliamentary Pairing Initiative (PPI) to participate in two-way exchange visits providing funds are available.
   j) Agree to provide hospitality to visitors from other CPA Branches not covered under the UKIRO budget.
   k) Note the 14% reduction to the CPA Scotland Branch budgets over this financial year and the ensuing 2 years.
   l) Decide whether or not to meet with the Commonwealth Consuls, in November 2011, to provide the Consuls with an opportunity to discuss the CPA Scotland forward work programme.
   m) Agree a forward programme of activity for approval by the Special Envoy, in relation to her role, until 2014. A draft outline proposal is attached at Annex B for further consideration and approval.
n) Consider, in the context of the Scottish Parliament’s UK and International Strategy, if there are any thematic or geographic areas which might benefit from targeted inward/outward visits.

o) Subject to the consensus following discussion of item n) above, consider approving cross party delegation outward visits where there is a robust business case which fits with priorities set by the BEC and complements the Scottish Parliament’s UK and International Strategy.

Branch finances

3. At the first meeting of the (BEC) held in June 2011 it was agreed to consider, at each subsequent meeting, details of the Branch finances. This regular financial update aims to assist Members when considering the resource planning of future activities.

4. As previously notified, the budget of £57,250 for the financial year 2011-12 is already set. However in line with budget reductions across the Scottish Parliament Members of the BEC are asked to consider and agree that a minimum sum of £5,000 should be surrendered this financial year.

5. At the last meeting of the BEC in June it was also agreed that a paper should be drafted which included normal Branch activity for consideration for inclusion in the new forward programme for Session 4. The following information reflects current matters in relation to Branch expenditure:

- In line with recent developments, costs have been revised to take into account the postponement of the proposed visits to Malawi planned for October 2011 and January 2012 until the PPI has been re-energised.
- The information contained in Annex A reflects possible expenditure associated with future work with the Special Envoy.
- The estimated costs for Commonwealth Week will be dependent on decisions made by the BEC in relation to what the Branch will do to celebrate Commonwealth Day. Given that 2013 will be a landmark year, as Scotland celebrates the 200th anniversary of David Livingstone’s birth, costs might be higher than usual if the BEC decide to host a major event.
- If the BEC agree to send a cross party delegation to South Africa in 2013 to attend the CPA Annual Conference and expand the visit to provide added value to the Scottish Parliament’s international priorities, this one activity may consume around half the budget. Early indications do suggest however, that this visit will deliver real benefits and will demonstrate value for money.
- A separate, one-off project budget, has been negotiated by UKIRO for the BIMR Conference in 2012. There will be no cost to the core CPA budget.
- CPA hospitality for inward visits is generally paid from the UKIRO budget. It is prudent however to set aside sufficient funds as a contingency to cover unexpected CPA related visits. CPA Scotland Branch often has to re-act to unexpected invitations and requests to visit.
- Projected budget reductions for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years have been made to the table shown in Annex A. Finance Office has advised that it will not be possible to make the overall 14% savings in this financial year. It should be noted that the CPA Scotland Branch budgets has fared better than
others across the organisation where budgets have been reduced by 20% or more in some cases.

6. At the moment there is an estimated under spend of around £19,353. This underspend has occurred due to the hiatus caused by the elections in May and the proposed exchanges with Malawi being postponed until the PPI has been re-energised with a new membership on the Scottish side. If the BEC agree to reduce the budget by £5,000 for this year to meet the required savings, this underspend reduces to £14,353.

7. The table at Annex A shows:

- Current expenditure for 2011/12 until the end of this financial year. The tracker figures shows costs either estimated, or in the process of being paid by Finance and Allowances’ colleagues. The balance column shows the estimated amount available to spend in accordance with information available at the time of preparation (which is approximately 1 week before the date of the meeting when the paper will be discussed). The difference between the balance column and the estimated expenditure column produces the over/underspend projection.

- Projected expenditure to possible activities already identified from 1 April 2012 until 31 March 2014.

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