CPA FORWARD PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITY AND FINANCE – REGULAR UPDATE

1. The purpose of this paper is to:
   - Provide a note on decisions required for possible changes to the draft forward programme of activity for the period 2011-14.
   - Provide an update and breakdown on the Branch finances (Annex A).

Background

2. The Programme of Activity set out at Annex A has been updated in light of decisions made at the last meeting and events which have taken place since the last meeting. Where there are financial implications, explanations are set out in paragraphs 4-6 below.

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 agreed that the sum of £15,000 should be returned this financial year.

5. The following information reflects current matters in relation to Branch expenditure and invites decisions on some of these matters:
   - In relation to the Parliamentary Pairing Initiative with Malawian MPs, no further activity is planned in the 2011-12 financial year for exchange visits.
   - President John Hogg from the Australian Senate will visit the Scottish Parliament from 12-14 December.
   - An invitation to apply to attend the ‘Conflict, Peace and Regeneration’ Conference in Northern Ireland from 7-10 February 2012 has recently been received. Costs are likely to be in the region of £600 including travel and accommodation for one delegate. A copy of the invitation is attached at Annex B.
   - An invitation to attend the 61st Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice & Procedures at the Houses of Parliament, London, Westminster from 4-10 March 2012 has also been received. The cost is
likely to be in the region of £1,700 per delegate. CPA UK Branch is also running a Public Accounts Committee workshop from 11-15 March 2012. The cost is likely to be in the region £1,350 per delegate. A copy of the invitation to attend both the Westminster Seminar and the workshop is attached at Annex C for information.

- As already advised at the previous meeting, the estimated costs for Commonwealth Week will be dependent on decisions made by the BEC in relation on how we commemorate Commonwealth Day. Further information on this is in CPA Paper/S4/11-12/4/3 (agenda item 5).
- The CPA Secretariat has issued an invitation for Scotland Branch to send 2 young people to attend the Commonwealth Day celebrations in London which will take place on 12 March 2012. Further information on that is part of the Commonwealth Day paper on today’s agenda (CPA Paper/S4/11-12/4/3). If the BEC agree to participate, the cost to the Branch is likely to be in the region of £500.
- Sir Alan Haselhurst MP, Chair of the CPA is likely to visit at the end of March 2012. As is usual, we should offer Sir Alan the hospitality of the Branch.
- At the previous meeting, Members agreed that CPA Scotland Branch should attend the CPA Annual Conference in Sri Lanka from 10-17 September 2012. Fully flexible tickets are available and the range of costs available in that category can be discussed at the meeting.
- 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 react 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.

6. At the moment there is an estimated underspend of around £2,018 and not all of the suggestions above could be funded. Options can be discussed in more detail at the meeting, to ensure the best fit with the BEC’s priorities and match to the annual budget.

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