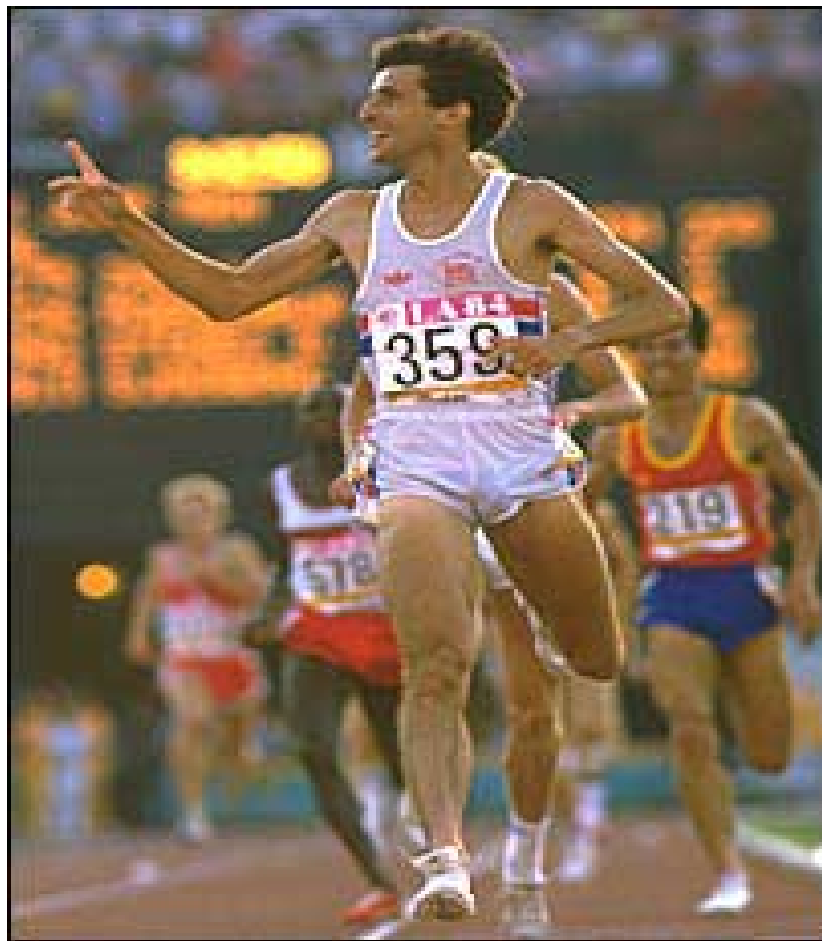




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**OLYMPIC SUPREMO COE:
JUMPING THROUGH
HOOPS, OR LORD OF THE
RINGS?**

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The photograph on the front cover shows Sebastian Coe sprinting to victory in the Olympic 1500 metres in Los Angeles in 1984. Now Lord Coe, Seb is one of the key players in the UK Olympic Delivery Authority, the body given overall responsibility for ensuring that the 2012 London Olympic Games happen on time and on budget. With projected costs now exceeding their original budgetary parameters, can Lord Coe regain control of this multi-billion pound project, master of all he surveys and lord of the rings? Or will he and everybody else associated with the UK Olympic Delivery Authority increasingly find themselves jumping through hoops, in an attempt to get this once-in-a-lifetime project back on the rails, as far as its spiralling costs are concerned? As a manager yourself, you might well consider that Seb's job amounts to the ultimate management challenge!

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 19th edition of E-Topics. This edition is being circulated almost exactly three months after the spring 2008 (18th) edition. I had intended to get this latest IPSM quarterly journal out to members by e-mail many weeks ago, but alas work pressures and a lack of available articles have conspired to defeat that laudable aim! Still, they say that good things come to those who wait – but I must confess, that doesn't sound very convincing, even to me!

Since the spring edition, there have been two IPSM Council meetings, both taking place in new venues. On 9th May, and for the first time in the Institute's history, the IPSM Council's quarterly meeting took place in the North-East. Our hosts were the Byker Bridge Housing Association, based in Byker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Council member Maurice Condie is the BBHA's Chief Executive, and his North-East colleagues made sure that Council members were given a hearty welcome and made to feel at home. The Council's most recent meeting took place in Wales, again a first for the IPSM. This time, Barry Town Council acted as hosts, with IPSM President Derek Wolfe, the Town Council's (Chief) Executive Officer, providing a taxi service for some Council members, ferrying them from Barry Station and back again after the meeting. The Council's 15th July meeting took place in the Town Council's modern Council Chamber.

There is a separate article within this edition covering the latest issues considered and determined by Council, such as the formulation of a Business Plan, a Communications Strategy and a Marketing Strategy and confirmed proposals for a Celebratory Dinner in Liverpool on Friday 10th October. Again, please see the following pages for details of this historic event.

Finally, please can I make a heartfelt plea to those 57 members who have STILL not paid their 2008 subscriptions to the IPSM, to do so with all speed. Whilst I can accept that many subscriptions are not paid until an employer's new financial year in April, even though they fall due for payment in January, we are now well into the second half of the Institute's year. Lynette, our Administrative Officer, has already sent out two requests for payment, the first to all members on 19th January and the second more recently to those who have yet to pay. If any members have been made redundant and are experiencing financial hardship, I am quite happy to negotiate a reduction for 2008. If on the other hand, you are unhappy about some aspect of the IPSM's services (or lack of) please let me know, so that Council can fix the problem.

Whilst writing, you might like to know that the IPSM's website is currently undergoing a complete overhaul, as well as being transferred from oneandone, our current web hosts, to a new provider. The new site should be up-and-running by early September – hopefully, you'll like the changes!

Derek Wolfe, FIPSM,
President and Hon. Secretary

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

I am delighted to welcome the IPSM's newest members to the Institute. They are **Roland Hewson** (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council) **Paul Atkins** (Strategic Procurement Manager, Central Services Department, Stoke City Council) **Nigel Barron** (Director of Finance & Administration, South Essex Special Needs Housing Association) and **Michael Chandler** (Company Secretary & Regulatory Manager, Corporate Services Department, Maidstone Housing Trust).

In addition, and seven years after he first joined the IPSM, I am very pleased to be able to welcome **Brian Roche**, Internal Auditor, Internal Audit Service, Swindon Borough Council, back to the Institute.

LOCAL COUNCILS' – THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE? (Part 4)

This article represents the final chapter in my current local government career, since moving from “mainstream” local government, gaining the post of Town Clerk to Keynsham Town Council in October 1992. In leaving my then employer, Avon County Council, I made a transition from principal local authorities, the sphere within which I had worked since 1974, into the relatively unknown and (for me) uncharted “waters” of local councils. The term “local councils” covers Community, Parish and Town Councils, being a generic term, in much the same way that the term “principal councils” covers unitary, county, district and borough councils, including London Boroughs, Metropolitan Boroughs and the unique City of London Corporation, for whom I worked in the mid 1980's.

I was keen to return to my chosen career-path, that of working with and for local councils, so when an opportunity presented itself at the end of 2001, I grasped it with both hands! An advertisement for the Post of Town Clerk to Portland Town Council appeared on Dorset County Council's website. As I was then commuting between Axminster and London every week, I was pleased to apply for a much more local position. I was interviewed by a panel of five Councillors in the Council's rented offices in the former Portland Urban District Council building in January 2002, and having been offered the job, and having given my then employers Barnardo's one months notice, I duly commenced my duties on 18th February. The offices themselves had been purpose-built in the 1930's for the former Portland UDC, and were very square, grey and drab – sadly, the buildings turned out to have a lot in common with many of the Councillors then serving on the Town Council! I was appointed on a 22.5 hours per week contract on spinal column point 35, but with the “promise” that the ruling group of independent councillors wished to see many changes, with much more in the way of direct service provision to local people. I of course hoped that the job would develop over time so that I was able to occupy a full-time post, bearing in mind that I had a family to feed, and Councillors hoped to be able to modernise Portland Town Council and provide some significant services for the benefit of the local community, relying on my extensive experience and knowledge of best practice elsewhere in order to realise their ambitions.

Amazingly, almost as soon as I started work on Portland, a petition signed by 10 local government electors and calling for the abolition of Portland Town Councillors was received from a disaffected group of electors, which included a number of opposition (but still independent) councillors. The petition also called for a referendum and the

convening of a special Town Meeting, an event peculiar to the local councils' tier of local government. The Parish Meeting duly took place in one of the many community centres on the Island, and the call for a referendum was duly proposed, seconded and agreed by the required number of electors. Unlike normal local government elections, or even by-elections in respect of casual vacancies, polling stations dealing with voting on referenda are only open during very limited hours. Nevertheless, when the appointed day came, a majority of islanders voted in favour of retaining the Council, and the rest is history!

This "victory" by the progressive group of councillors serving on the Council should have marked the start of the envisaged modernisation programme, but sadly this didn't prove to be the case. Two of the leading modernisers resigned shortly after the community's vote of confidence in the Town Council, as a result of squabbling and infighting regarding the involvement of certain specific outside groups in a special project to erect a stone "gateway" to the Island and Royal Manor of Portland. The Island itself in reality a peninsular connected via a two-mile causeway resulting from one of the most spectacular features of England's coast, its only natural World Heritage Site, namely the Jurassic Coastline. This 95 miles long stretch of coast incorporates Chesil Beach, which comprises pebbles and boulders formed following a number of geological events some 10,000 years ago. The "beach" is more than 20 miles long, measuring about 150 metres across at its widest point. Due to the depth of the sea and local currents in the vicinity of the Island, this "bar" of stones ends abruptly at Portland, forming a final long sweeping "beach" linking Weymouth and Portland.

On one side of the "bar" has been constructed the Portland Beach Road, which itself ends at Victoria Square, the most northerly area of land forming the Island and Royal Manor of Portland. Just in front of Victoria Square, and clearly visible to all those approaching the Island along the Beach Road, is the so-called Millennium Gateway, a tribute to Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II's unbroken reign of 50 years in 2002. Although the project itself was in many ways a great success, it missed its target year by a big margin, finally being opened in 2004! Following the elections in May 2004, it rapidly became clear that a number of newly-elected councillors wanted to have nothing to do with the previous Administration's modernising agenda, and were hell-bent on returning both Portland and Portland Town Council to the dark ages! I decided that my talents and abilities were best served elsewhere, and started in earnest to look around for new / alternative employment opportunities in the local councils sector.

Almost three years to the day after starting work as Portland's Town Clerk, I succeeded in being offered the post of Executive Officer with Barry Town Council in South Wales. Barry is the largest town with a single town council in Wales, and indeed is the sixth largest in the U.K., behind Weston-Super-Mare, Aylesbury, Hereford, Keighley and Bracknell, more-or-less in that order. My reference to "a single town council" refers to the fact that, rather unusually, Wrexham is served by 4 or 5 local councils, presumably for reasons connected with the town's history.

I have now been working for Barry Town Council for more than 3 and ½ years. The post has presented many challenges to me, and I have certainly felt the strain of being responsible for the efficient functioning of services in a very large town (by local councils' standards) in what can be a highly-charged political environment. But I have to say I feel that I really thrive on the challenges I face almost daily, and I certainly have no regrets about moving from mainstream local government into the local councils sector.

Derek Wolfe,
President.

IPSM COUNCIL 2008

The Institute's Council currently comprises 10 representatives, there being two unfilled vacancies at the current time in the 12 person structure established some years ago. In addition, the Council reserves the right to co-opt a limited number of additional representatives, to assist and advise other Council members in their deliberations on specific issues. Such appointments are normally time-limited, expiring on the date of the IPSM's next Annual General Meeting.

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DEVON APPROPRIATE ADULTS SCHEME

Well if I'd said to my Careers teacher all those years ago when I left school I wanted to be the manager of an Appropriate Adult Scheme I am sure I'd have been met with a blank look. Actually when I tell people what I do these days I am often still met with a blank look !!! Like many others I fell into this role more by serendipity than by a long standing / deeply buried desire.....

It was a newspaper article in my local evening paper that was asking for volunteers to work in a police custody setting that first caught my eye. (Not sure girls if it wasn't more the thought of fit fellas in uniform !!!!) I was delighted to be accepted and became one of the first AA vols in Devon. We were an immediate hit, entitled The Devon Appropriate Adults Volunteer Scheme (DAAVS) under the auspices of and I am now employed by Devon County Council (DCC).

Initially the scheme was funded by the YJB (Youth Justice Board) and so was born the role of volunteer appropriate adult. Originally a role filled by Professionals (with a large P) from social services and the youth offending teams, some 6 or 7 years ago someone, somewhere in the Home Office (I think) looked at the role and proclaimed that as it is such a specific and stand alone /individual role, it was one that could – after proper professional (small p) training be undertaken by a suitable volunteer .

It's a legal entity defined under codes C and part of code D of The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and involves the volunteer attending custody when a juvenile (currently under 17) or a vulnerable adult (VA) is arrested. The first port of call for the Police should be the parent/guardian/carer. However often they won't attend, or they cannot attend as they are the victim or have witnessed the offence, or indeed and sadly so often the case with vulnerable adults, there is simply no one. Their 'care in the community package ' boils down to a visit by a care support worker once a week for an hour, or indeed their social worker has a caseload from hell and cannot spare the average 5 hours needed to be spent in custody

When the original co-ordinator left almost a year later (lack of funding – oh that old familiar tale) he told me, as and when the local authority get their act together I should go for the role. I am never backward in coming forward and with redundancy looming by my then employers - a major player in the market research industry - I rang up the Head of DCC and said "I can do this - gis a job" and the rest is history!! I guess you could say that I liked the role of being an appropriate adult so much, I bought the company!

Having spent most of my working life in the private sector, I found moving into the public sector working left me shell shocked, what I was used to was deciding something in a day and actioning it by the following day at the latest. In the public sector it seemed that we needed a meeting about having a meeting, before deciding and then another meeting about how and when it was going to be implemented!!

Over the past four years of my reign as manager of the Devon Appropriate Adult Scheme (DAAVS) , I have trained over a 100 people, numerous volunteers plus Professional workers such as Social Workers, outreach support workers and Youth Offending Team staff, to fulfil the role of an Appropriate Adult. I also co-ordinate between CYPS, Social Services Emergency Duty Teams, Community Mental Health Teams, NHS healthcare offices working with Juveniles and Vulnerable Adults .

DAAVS is like the cavalry - called in when the police cannot access the family route. We operate 365 days per year on a rota basis from 9.00am – 10.00pm taking the pressure off the emergency duty teams and the various YOTs and Vulnerable Adult teams. We respond to the police custody centres in Torquay, Barnstaple and Exeter, so I run three separate teams, one for each custody centre, plus a few that live equidistant from two of the three custody centres, although I am always mindful of my meagre budget.

I used to manage over 800 researchers/ mystery shoppers throughout the south/ south west of England. I was involved as a manager with the government census and I also liked officiating at parliamentary/local government elections, I find managing around 40 volunteers far more challenging, but also more fun and enjoyable, they are a great bunch one and all. I will not take on a volunteer just because they are local to the custody centre.. Indeed approximately 50% of the applications I receive to be an AA are turned down.. I go for quality rather than quantity.

Mind you I have got it wrong once or twice. I have far more lady volunteers than gentlemen, so when a gent applied who appeared on interview to be just right, living close to the police station, plenty of time on his hands, sensible etc. I invited him to the training, which I tend to do twice yearly. At lunch on week one he expressed his surprise at the age of the volunteers on the course – all ladies except him and all in their late twenties/early thirties. He'd expected ladies in their 50's , the penny then dropped as he went on to explain he'd only moved into his new home a few months previously and was having problems meeting ladies !! He did last out the training and gave me 3 months of his time, before disappearing up country with his ex lady love ..! .

So what makes people want to get involved? I suspect it is because it's something a bit different. After all police programmes tend to get high audience viewing rates . Not many of us (thankfully) are likely to see the inside of a custody centre. We are not there as the DPs new best friend however , or indeed to be on the side of the police. We are there as the referee, to ensure fair play, confirm understanding and to ensure that the rights and dignity of the Detained Person (Dp) are respected.. I always turn it around when I'm chatting with potential volunteers asking how would YOU like to be treated should you find yourself in custody..

Commonsense, confidentiality and an ability to be non judgemental are paramount to be an AA. I often get people who have been on the wrong side of the law before and now want to 'get their own back' needless to say I don't invite them for training ! that doesn't however preclude someone with a criminal record applying for and being accepted as an AA.

I also get a proportion of young people wanting it as a summer fill in for their CVs, this sadly doesn't work either as I really need an 18 months commitment from application to being experienced enough to deal with all types of cases. They have to undertake an intensive 2 day induction training, 30 hours of directed training in a 12 month period plus the operational field calls, firstly with an experienced mentor then being let loose on increasingly complex cases.

There are constant updates/ changes to advise/inform and given the diverse calls we attend I ensure top up training by professionals from the mental health teams, sexual offences workers, etc.

My volunteers come from all walks of life from a mum with teenagers of her own, to several retired and active HCPs, ex teachers, mature students doing O.U in law or social work, ex police personnel, retired business men through to several with degrees and doctorates acknowledged as specialists within their own fields .. diverse though their back

grounds and credentials may be.. they all voluntarily bring their invaluable talents to bear within the scheme. We act as AAs in all sorts of cases from theft of a can of soft drink, half a chocolate bar (yes honest) or a pot plant, through to major acts of crime against Society and the Person.

Whenever possible I will try and match the talents/ special interests of the AA with the case in question. We also have safeguards in place such as a juvenile has to have a solicitor if they are having a DAAVs volunteer, and whenever possible we have a solicitor for an adult too being of course mindful of other legislation such as The Human Rights Act.

Following a High court decision the Police have made it mandatory that IF the VA was diagnosed with certain mental health difficulties in the past, they must have an AA present even if non episodal at the time of detention.

However all AAs have it drummed into them that they are NOT social workers, they cannot take the person home etc.. their role is custody based only. They can signpost the Detained Person (Dp) and they can write up on their paper work any concerns they may have. Part of my role is to ensure these go to the relevant agencies.

DAAVS is a member of NAAN (don't you just love all these abbreviations) National Appropriate Adult Network – who have direct links with the home office, there are a further fellow 40 plus schemes in the country. No two days are ever the same - and of course there's nowt so queer as folk, and I love em all - bless them.

I am in my second year of membership with The Institute of Public Sector Management, am the National Appropriate Adults Network (NAAN) representative for my Police area and am shortly to take up a position on the National Council with responsibilities for implementing legislation, training, protocols and good practice. Within a remit with Vulnerable Adults, I'm the National Secretary of the charity **Practitioners Alliance Against Abuse of Vulnerable Adults (PAVAUK)** and sit on the Board of Trustees.

The words in this article are my own and do not reflect any position or comment from any of the organisations mentioned.

Stephanie Pateman IPSM
Co-ordinator
Devon Appropriate Adults Scheme

INTEGRATION OF A WEB-BASED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Bolsover District Council's Performance Management framework development lends weight to the adage about people being at the heart of Information Technology and not the kit! Having developed a simple Microsoft Access-based piece of software – but importantly with a web browser up front – in 2005, Bolsover District Council decided it needed a more complete package that pulled together all the elements of a Performance Management framework.

We wanted it to be accessible – easy to see, easy to read and work with and simple to form around our existing business processes. The system we have developed, christened PERFORM II, links together Corporate Aims and Objectives, Service Plans, Performance Indicators, political responsibilities, individual strategies and initiatives together with appraisals. Phase 1 (PERFORM I), the Access-based package, first developed in 2002, allowed Officers to come to terms with reporting their performance measures – electronically - directly to a central point on a regular timetabled-basis. But by choosing a basic template that satisfied the main parameters of performance measurement - target setting, mile stoning, linkage of activities – the Authority has been able to concentrate on the basis necessities. That is, getting managers to report regularly and consistently. You need to crack this before performance measurement will truly drive Performance Management.

Previously, all the data gathered by the PERFORM I system, was laboriously downloaded to Excel worksheets and presented to Members as part of a regular timetable of sub-Scrutiny meetings. But it's the early establishment of this process that gives such a strong member involvement to the present framework. These monthly meetings, each one of four with 7 Scrutiny members, deal directly with the performance of particular service areas. The groups can closely examine a suite of indicators, activities and progress with Service Plan key tasks and oversee medium term Corporate Objectives. Individual initiatives are monitored and each group undertakes its own Scrutiny Review programme and Cabinet Members report on their portfolio responsibilities on an 'invited' basis. As a result, the Executive can be held to account and all Members have a detailed understanding of their service responsibilities.

Where there are misgivings about what's reported to them or concerns about performance, an exception report is created and sent 'up' to the main Scrutiny group. The whole system is administered by three Officers: a Scrutiny and Policy Officer, a Planning and Performance Officer and a Performance and Quality Officer. Each of the three Officers understands each of the processes involved allowing 'cross skilling' and a broad understanding of the activities of each of the Member groups. The PERFORM II system sits at the centre, the mechanism that links all the data and information together. What the Authority has not lost sight of is, the software is only the tool.

PERFORM's success is how it has facilitated a 'right first time' culture. In the early stages of development, the software was formed around the needs of the authority rather than the other way round. Larger, outwardly more sophisticated software packages tend to dictate development parameters and direction (e.g. Balanced Scorecard, EFQM), whereas, PERFORM was developed in the authority's 'likeness'. We decided, in simple terms, what it would look like – our Corporate image – what we wanted to do and what we wanted to achieve. The software company delivered a basic training package to three Officers at their premises and then assisted the Authority along on its journey with regular helpdesk input. At this stage, these first steps threw up questions about how our framework linked together and anomalies in our thinking.

The software producer, TEN Systems, encouraged the authority by not being prescriptive about which direction and way the Council should develop the package. The Council was assisted in the development so its own initiatives and existing framework could be integrated. We also decided that it should be 'open access', that is, all those Staff and Officers with access to the authority's intranet can see at any time any aspect of the Authority's performance. The only check put in place was warning advice being given to Heads of Service about data protection and the display of personal information. This 'heart on our sleeve' approach is contributing to the development of a 'no blame' culture as everybody's performance is on display and not 'buried' in reports. Even if some

staff never actually look at the system, when Officers are typing free text or data into the system, they are 'psychologically' laying themselves open.

A further aspect of this 'open' approach is, the software is set up so it recognises individuals by their network log-in user names and passwords. The system is tailored so the responsibility for individual indicators or activities is passed to particular Officers and they have to log on to the system to enter performance and progress data and information detail for their service activities. This gives 'ownership', an important aspect of 'right first time'. A further aspect of this approach is, managers must have confidence that data and information being presented on their behalf – by the system – is accurate. The only way to truly ensure that, is to give them responsibility for its entry. Also, by linking all the elements of the Performance Management framework together, the data and information only ever has to be entered once, thus, avoiding duplication and the inevitable inaccuracies that creep in but more importantly, reducing the amount of time spent on producing reports. The key to good Performance Management is not just software; it's a package of integrated measures – Audit, Member involvement, Officer commitment – and a SIMPLE I.T. system!

Robin Rilly
Council Member.

PUBLIC SERVICES NEWS

REFORM OF THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUBSIDY SYSTEM

The Chartered Institute of Housing, working with others, has been making a strong case for reform of the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system for a number of years. They have accepted an invitation by Communities & Local Government to support the review by running a series of workshops – attended by practitioners and other experts – and to engage stakeholders in other ways to identify and consider some options for reform.

There are four work streams on relevant themes considered within the workshops:

- Costs and standards for social housing
- Rents and service charges
- Mechanisms for delivering funding
- Current rules governing a local authority's HRA

It is anticipated that each work stream group will meet at least three times during the course of the review – for the first time in April/May, the second time in May/June and on a third occasion in September/October 2008.

Adrian Waite has been appointed a member of the workshop on mechanisms for delivering funding. Being involved in the Review in this way does come with some responsibilities. Individuals are being requested to support the work of the review by providing evidence, writing papers, conducting research or other activity.

The overall objective of the mechanisms for delivering funding work stream is to develop a sustainable mechanism for delivering council housing finance that is fair to tenants, local authorities and taxpayers, and maximises the efficient and effective use of the assets within the Housing Revenue Account.

Key assumptions that are being made include:

- The present Housing Revenue Account subsidy system is unsustainable in terms of the resources. Options should be on the basis of a fully funded system.

- Elements in the Housing Revenue Account subsidy entitlement formula create volatility and uncertainty for council house finances.
- The system cannot be abolished in the short term.
- Changes to the mechanism for financing should not come with an extra cost to Government or tenants unless there is a strong value for money case for doing so, and it is affordable.
- The current regime is criticised as being complicated and opaque. Whatever modifications are made should not further complicate the system.

The key questions that are being considered are:

- Should local authorities be allowed to retain all of their rents?
- How far can we achieve local autonomy but still exercise sufficient influence over a devolved system to protect the Government's fiscal position?
- How should we manage debt?
- What would we need to do to make the current subsidy system fit for purpose and how?
- What are the terms & conditions under which self-financing, or any other viable alternative, could take place?
- What improvements can be made to our handling of capital, for example for better asset management?

The scope of the work stream includes:

- Central or local control
 - o Devolution
 - o Retention and Improvement
- Rents & surpluses
 - o Redistribution
 - o Surpluses and Debt
- Costs & standards
- Handling of Debt
- Capital
 - o Future of Borrowing Support
 - o Case for a Capital Charge
 - o Receipts Policy and Asset Management
 - o Relationship between capital and revenue

Matters excluded from the work stream include:

- The HRA (i.e. the landlord account)
- Level of allowances within the HRA subsidy system
- Rents policy
- Whether councils should continue to own council housing

Projects within the work stream include:

- Debt
- Capital Receipts and Investment
- Financing principles
- Opting out of Housing Revenue Account subsidy
- Keeping and improving the current system
- International comparisons

One international comparison that is under consideration is that of Scotland where there is a Housing Revenue Account system similar to that in England but no Housing Subsidy system. At the inaugural meeting of the work stream, Adrian Waite was asked to prepare a paper on the implications of Housing Revenue Accounts paying a return on taxpayers' investment. This paper was considered at the June meeting of the work stream.

'AWICS' is holding a series of regional seminars during September and October 2008 on 'Developments in Local Authority Housing Finance in England'. These seminars will include an update on the work of the HM Treasury / Communities & Local Government work streams.

The seminars will also address other topical issues including:

- Communities & Local Government and Treasury Review of Housing Revenue Account – Funding Mechanisms, Housing Revenue Account rules, Costs and Standards, Rents and Service Charges
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 – Implications for Local Authorities of the creation of the Homes and Communities Agency and the Office for Tenants and Social Landlords
- Housing Green Paper, Comprehensive Spending Review and Housing Subsidy Determination 2008/09 – What this means for 2009/10 and future years
- Achieving Efficiency and Value for Money
- New Affordable Housing
- Local Area Agreements and the Area Based Grant including the absorption of Supporting People into Area Based Grant
- Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)
- Rent Restructuring – Convergence in 2012, 2017 or never?
- Ring Fencing – Will it be enforced more strongly or will it come to an end?
- The future for Arms Length Management Organisations after 2010?

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL DISPOSES OF OLD COUNCIL HOUSES

Many local authorities have disposed of old Council Houses, but Babergh District Council claims to have disposed of the oldest! In 1900, Samford Rural District Council bought two thatched and timber framed fifteenth century cottages in the village of Tattlingstone for one penny. Since then Samford Rural District Council and then Babergh District Council have rented them out as council houses. When the staircases became dangerous in the mid-twentieth century they were removed but the tenants requested that they should not be replaced and since then they have inhabited only the ground floor rooms. Unfortunately, one of the tenants died recently and the other moved into a nursing home. Council officers inspected the houses and decided that, while the houses would require a major investment to reach the decent homes standard, they would be quite valuable on the open market. The Council has therefore disposed of them and plans to use the proceeds to build four modern council homes.

I wonder what the fifteenth century builders would have thought of the 'decent homes standard' – and whether the new council houses will still be there in the 27th century!

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY

It was in January 2007 that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced a proposal to create a new housing and regeneration agency for England. In her statement to the House of Commons on 17 January 2007 she said:

"I am convinced that we should now move towards one national housing and regeneration agency that combines the functions of the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships with key delivery functions from my own Department including in the areas of decent homes, housing market renewal, housing PFI, housing growth and urban regeneration. I propose to establish a new agency, Communities England (later renamed Homes and Communities Agency), to support local authorities in their drive to create and shape prosperous and cohesive communities. This new expert partner will pioneer innovative new ways of working with key partners in the public, private and voluntary sector to ensure we get even better outcomes from our investment in places throughout England."

“Communities England will form a key part of the new delivery landscape set out in the local government White Paper, offering a one-stop delivery partner for local government. It offers a coherent portfolio of investment tools, and will work alongside local authorities, to adopt a more flexible market-based approach to housing development.”

The Department felt that by bringing together these organisations into one body significant benefits would be obtained by:

- Being a one-stop delivery partner for local government and other partners
- More effective forms of investment by more efficient use of public resources and powers to achieve the desired outcomes. This approach is particularly important in the delivery of estate regeneration, mixed regeneration and strategic growth sites
- Increased private sector leverage for regeneration projects
- More effective marshalling of scarce skills
- Sharing best practice
- Economies of scale: particularly in procurement
- Increased negotiating power: with developers and suppliers
- Increased innovation
- More timely interventions: harmonising the timing and sequencing of Housing Corporation, Communities and Local Government and English Partnerships activity (e.g. bidding rounds, corporate plans and programme horizons) would greatly increase their impact, as well as allowing the new body to respond more flexibly to urgent needs
- Increased environmental benefits: Communities England will pioneer the low and zero carbon standards in the new Code for Sustainable Homes
- A stronger, more strategic Department: moving delivery support for Housing Market Renewal, Decent Homes, housing growth and urban regeneration outside Central Government, will sharpen Communities and Local Government’s focus on strategic Policy.

Clearly the overriding aim behind the decision to bring together English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation and the various delivery work undertaken by the Communities and Local Government was to achieve greater focus, efficiency, value for money and improved delivery of the government’s regeneration and housing objectives.

On the whole the proposals were well received by the sector. In relation to the Consultation paper the Government received 187 responses. In relation to the proposal for a new housing and regeneration agency the responses were largely supportive; the key issues raised were how it would work alongside other agencies (especially local authorities) and how to ensure it would be accountable to residents and communities.

The National Housing Federation welcomed the new agency saying that the: *“Proposed transfer of functions because it has the potential to support our goal of improved outcomes for neighbourhoods and communities”*

In January 2008 the Government provided more details of the work of the Agency. The Agency will take responsibility for the management of the following:

- Regeneration programmes from English Partnerships, including remediation of brownfield land, facilitating the provision of homes for key workers, the National Coalfields programme and developing its strategic sites programme to facilitate the delivery of increasing numbers of new homes
- Provision of new affordable housing, currently provided through social housing grant from the Housing Corporation
- Delivery responsibilities for the decent homes programmes for the social housing sector from the Department for Communities and Local Government including Arms Length Management Organisations, Large Scale Voluntary Transfers and Housing Private Finance Initiatives for existing housing and new supply. This will enable the Agency to work closely with local authorities to join up delivery of Decent Homes with the wider

regeneration of communities. Ministers will continue to make final decisions on stock transfers and the establishment of Arms Length Management Organisations

- Transferring programme management responsibility from Communities and Local Government on Housing Market Renewal facilitating the joining up with other agency programmes, allowing it to work with Local Authorities to develop multifaceted regeneration programmes that deliver community as well as housing market renewal
- The Agency will take on the housing and regeneration delivery functions of Communities and Local Government in support of the main existing growth areas, including Milton Keynes-South Midlands, London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough, and Ashford. Fulfilling its objective of becoming the "Best Delivery Partner" for local authorities, it will also work with local authorities to develop support for new and emerging growth points and will become Government's main source of advice on the delivery of housing growth. Responsibility for selecting and assessing growth areas will remain with Communities and Local Government and with Ministers;
- Similarly the Agency will take on housing and regeneration delivery functions from Communities and Local Government in the Thames Gateway, including driving forward the implementation of the Thames Gateway Delivery Plan published in November.
- Additionally, the Academy for Sustainable Communities will transfer to the Agency, as will delivery responsibilities for the following programmes, currently undertaken by the Department of Communities and Local Government:
 - o Mixed Communities
 - o Capital Investment on Homelessness Hostels and Specialist Supported Housing
 - o National Land-Use Database of Previously Developed Land.

'AWICS' is holding a series of regional seminars during September and October 2008 on 'Implementing the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008'. These seminars will include reference to the Homes and Communities Agency. The course will be a comprehensive guide to the Housing and Regeneration Act and will cover:

- Government Priorities and Policies for Social Housing
- Regulation of Social Housing and Registration of Social Housing Providers
- Housing and Communities Agency
- Office for Tenants and Social Landlords
- Reform of Local Authority Housing Finance
- Disposal of Property
- Other Provisions

HOUSING ASSOCIATION GRANT IN SCOTLAND

In its Green Paper of 2007, the Scottish Government stated that securing greater efficiency from Registered Social Landlords requires them to adopt a fundamentally different approach to the way in which they subsidise new Registered Social Landlord housing. The current approach to awarding Housing Association Grant is straightforward. Any Registered Social Landlord seeking to build new houses for social rent can apply to Government for Housing Association Grant to make up the difference between the cost to them of building each house and the amount of borrowing they can support from the rental income that the house will generate once operating expenses have been deducted.

The Scottish Government considers that the strength of this process is that it allows relatively large numbers of Registered Social Landlords to develop new social housing in response to local need. Its weakness is that it does not enable them to form a strategic view on where to direct subsidy to meet need most effectively within housing market areas. They propose to replace it with a new approach that allocates subsidy to fewer larger scale and longer-term programmes. To improve the value that is gained from public expenditure, the Scottish Government would require the lead developer to identify

the greatest amount of resources, including money and land, that they and the Registered Social Landlords for whom they were developing, could contribute to the programme and to develop proposals for using them as efficiently and effectively as possible.

It will take some time to introduce a competitive regime – and the Scottish Government would not expect it to be in operation before April 2009. In the meantime, they believe that the increase in demand for social housing and their duty to secure value for public expenditure require them to make immediate progress in reducing the cost of subsidy per house. A competitive regime such as this has operated in England since 1988 and has resulted in reductions in grant rates to an average of 44%. The responses to the consultation on the Green Paper were published in May 2008, with most of the responses regarding the proposals on Housing Association Grant being critical.

However, in June 2008 the Scottish Government announced a £1.5 billion affordable housing budget. However, this represents a lower level of grant per home than has been available during previous years. It is intended that 21,500 new affordable homes will be built and the Scottish Government has expressed the view that this can be achieved through greater financial efficiency. Stewart Maxwell MSP, Minister for Communities said: *“I firmly believe that housing associations can achieve these efficiencies and still deliver the quality of service for which they are renowned.”*

However, Housing Associations have protested that this will oblige them to increase borrowing by about 30% at a time when the financial sector is becoming reluctant to lend and interest rates are expected to increase – forcing them to increase rents. Brian Gegan, Chair of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, was quoted in ‘Inside Housing’ as saying:

“This is housing policy created by M Mouse and D Duck... I think every housing association in the land will be sitting down with governing bodies and saying ‘Can we afford to develop any new homes?’.”

‘AWICS’ is holding a seminar ‘All You Want to Know about Scottish Housing Association Finance’ in Edinburgh on 1st October 2008. The session is suitable for Board members, housing managers, finance staff and anyone with an interest in Scottish Housing Association Finance.

AWICS VALUE FOR MONEY STRATEGY

Much has been written and said about value for money strategies in local authorities, housing associations and other public bodies – but the principles of value for money are equally applicable to any organisation – public, private or voluntary. ‘AWICS’ is an example of an ethical business with a value for money strategy that puts customers at its heart. Value for Money is about how to deliver Value for Money products and services to customers. Only through doing this will an organisation achieve Value for Money for itself.

Achieving Value for Money involves striking the right balance between economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Economy means doing things at the least cost; Efficiency means maximising the ratio between outputs and inputs; and Effectiveness means maximising the relationship between outcomes and outputs. However, it is not possible to determine how to achieve this balance without first establishing what customers would regard as a Value for Money service. But how do you find out what customers would regard as a Value for Money service? I would suggest doing three things: First, put

yourself in the customers' shoes. If you were buying this service what would you regard as representing Value for Money?

Second, ask the customers in a structured way. Actively seek feedback from people who attend regional seminars and in-house training courses or who receive management consultancy services or buy books. Do it in a way that encourages customers to express themselves honestly – pointing out weaknesses as well as strengths and inviting customers to point to opportunities. Consider the feedback carefully: Do they suggest that there should be a change of approach to providing existing services? Do they suggest that new services would be appreciated?

Third, listen! Shortly after I started working as a management accountant I stayed overnight in a pub in a North Yorkshire village and spent the evening talking to the landlord. He told me that he had built his business by listening to his customers. Customers, he said, are keen to tell you what they want but they will rarely do this directly. They will do it in subtle ways. You need to keep your ears open. I am not sure that I am naturally a good listener but I am sure that he was right and that if you want to provide Value for Money services you need to listen carefully to customers. Having done these three things, my conclusion is that our customers are looking for a quality product at a competitive price. We need, therefore, to achieve the high quality standards that our customers seek while ensuring that our costs remain competitive.

The next question is how to achieve this Value for Money service. However, it is important to recognise that this is a moving objective. Customers' expectations will constantly change and will usually increase. Furthermore, the service that you provide will always fall short of perfection. Value for Money is therefore a quest for continuous improvement rather than an attempt to achieve a specific goal. It is a constant circular process of planning, delivering and evaluating that results in improved Value for Money each time you complete the circle.

Adrian Waite,
Vice-President.

('AWICS' is an ethical management consultancy, providing support principally to those who provide public services. It offers 'Independence, Integrity and Value'. For more information about 'AWICS' please visit their websites at www.awics.co.uk and www.awics.eu or contact them at AWICS Limited, Appleby Business Centre, Bridge Street, Appleby in Westmorland, Cumbria. CA16 6QH. Tel: 017683-52347 or 52165. Fax: 017683-54005. E-mail: Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk)

SPIRALS' FORTHCOMING TRAINING COURSES

Spirals, the Institute's strategic learning & development partners, have drastically revamped its open programme to make it a lot more comprehensive. The following are the courses being run during the remainder of the summer, together with details of Spirals recently announced NVQ levels 4 & 5 Executive Diploma and Advanced Executive Diploma in Management qualifications.



Open Programme

All of the courses will be held in the Cambridge area and IPSM members are obviously entitled to the same discount as before (20%). The current programme of Spirals Open Courses is as follows:-

Monday 25 th / Tuesday 26 th August	Confident Recruitment (2 days)
Tuesday 9 th September	Minute Taking (1 day)
Monday 22 nd September	Developing Assertiveness & Confidence
Tuesday 23 rd September	Process Mapping (1 day)
Tuesday 7 th October	Effective Tendering (1 day)
Friday 10 th October	Minute Taking (1 day)
Tuesday 13 th / Wednesday 14 th October	Project Management (2 days)
Tuesday 10 th / Wednesday 11 th November	Confident Recruitment (2 days)
Tuesday 17 th November	Getting Organised – Making the Best Use of Your Time

All delegates receive 30 days free support from the course tutor after attending the training. One day courses are charged at £165 / delegate, two day courses are charged at £325 / delegate. For more information or to book your place call Spirals on: 01953 602505 or email general@spiralsplus.com

About Spirals

Spirals is an exciting company with a growing reputation and proven track record for delivering bespoke services, based on tried and tested methodologies. At the heart of the organisation is the belief that excellent performance comes from well managed and innovative people, processes and projects.

Spirals specialise in working with public and third sector organisations. Our understanding of the culture and drivers of these sectors ensures we produce work that is sensitive yet challenges in the ways laid out by the modernisation agenda.

As well as working with organisations to improve their people, we also work with them to help them develop as organisations. This work includes Investors in People consultancy and support and helping the achievement of BVPIs.

Spirals are an approved supplier to the IDeA, the strategic training partner for the Institute of Public Sector Management (IPSM) and regularly speak at events on the modernisation agenda, efficiency in the public sector and developing people.

Our reputation is for high levels of customer feedback, and for bespoke services developed specifically for each client group. Clients and delegates say they like our plain English and common sense approach. We take pride in designing our assignments to embed the learning and development within the organisation.

For more information about Spirals' Management Consultancy, Training and Development and Project Management Services, call 01953 602505 or view our website, www.spiralsplus.com

Executive Diploma in Management

The Executive Diploma in Management Programme is a certificated programme, accredited by the Chartered Management Institute through Change Consultancy and Training.

The emphasis of the Programme is on issues facing the higher levels of management, including the deployment of resources to achieve given targets.

On successful completion of this Programme, the candidate will know and understand:

- Aspects of innovation, continuous improvement, re-invention and strategic quality management
- How to manage the quality of work in the context of a healthy, safe and productive working environment
- How to manage physical and financial resources to meet organisational plans
- How to enhance one's own performance and build up relationships
- How to manage the recruitment process and re-deployment
- How teams and individuals can be structured to meet organisational objectives
- How to deal with situations where individuals' or teams' performance is unsatisfactory
- How to chair meetings and establish communication systems that facilitate decision-making

In brief, the Programme consists of eight modules, which cover the following topics:

C51 – Developing in Your Management and Leadership Role

C52 – Managing Performance

C53 – Financial and Resource Management

C54 – Managing Business Challenges

C55 – Managing Operations

O52 – Managing Information Systems

O53 – Developing and Implementing Human Resource Plans

O54 – Developing Project Specifications and Objectives

O55 – Developing and Implementing Marketing Plans

The programme runs for approximately 18 months, with an event being held each month.

To achieve the award of the Executive Diploma in Management, participants are required to:

- Complete 8 assignments of 3,500 words

- Produce an integrated project (of 7,000 words) and present this at the conclusion of the Programme in the form of a 20 minute presentation to a group of invited guests

C51 – Development in your Management and Leadership Role

C55 – Managing Operations

C52 – Managing Performance

O52 – Managing Information Systems

C53 – Financial & Resource Management

O53 – Developing & Implementing Human Resource Plans

C54 – Managing Business Challenges

O54 – Developing Project Specifications and Objectives

O55 – Developing & Implementing Marketing Plans

Note: Half day Support Meetings will take place in the morning 09:30 – 12:30

All Workshops will run 09:30 – 16:30

CW = Charles Walker

CC = Chris Cleary

MMN = Maria Marques-Neves

The cost for the Executive Diploma in Management is £2450.

IPSM members interested in any of the above courses should contact us for further details and information. In a fortnight's time we will have a brochure describing all of the courses, available as a PDF document for displaying on the IPSM website, if that would be helpful.

David Elverson, MSc MCIM, Commercial Director, Spirals Ltd.
Jackie Walters, Office Manager, Spirals Ltd.

Tel: 01953 602505 Fax: 01953 605800

Email: david@spiralsplus.com Website: www.spiralsplus.co.uk

Open Executive Diploma in Management – 2008/2009

	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Event	Induction ½ day	Workshop 1	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 2	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 3	Workshop 4	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 5	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 6	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 7	½ day support Meeting	Workshop 8	½ day Support Meeting	Workshop 9	½ day Support Meeting	Project Presentation	
Dates	7 th Feb 2008	6 th Mar 2008	7 th April 2008	8 th May 2008	11 th June 2008	11 th July 2008	6 th Aug 2008	11 th Sept 2008	6 th Oct 2008	13 th Nov 2008	8 th Dec 2008	12 th Jan 2009	13 th Feb 2009	11 th Mar 2009	9 th April 2009	8 th May 2009	10 th June 2009	17 th July 2009	9 th Sept 2009	
Modules		C51		C52		O54	C54		C55		C53		O53		O55		O52			
Facilitated by:	CW & MMN	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CC	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW	CW & MMN
Start Assignment		C51		C52		O54	C54		C55		C53		O53		O55		O52			
Submit Assignment				C51		C52		O54	C54		C55		C53		O53		O55		O52	
Project Milestones						Agreement on Title						Progress Review							Hand In Project	Presen- tation
Venue	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	TBC	Manor Farm Barns	Manor Farm Barns	Manor Farm Barns

THE IPSM'S GOVERNING COUNCIL – RECENT & CURRENT ISSUES

As pointed out in the introduction to this edition of E-Topics / Topics, two meetings of the IPSM's Council have taken place since publication of the magazine's 18th Edition. Generally, Council tries to meet in January, April, July and September, the latter meeting to plan the organisation's November AGM. On 9th May, and for the first time in the Institute's history, the IPSM Council's quarterly meeting took place in the North-East. Our hosts were the Byker Bridge Housing Association, based in Byker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Council member Maurice Condie is the BBHA's Chief Executive, and his North-East colleagues made sure that Council members were given a hearty welcome and made to feel at home.

The Council's most recent meeting took place in Wales, again a first for the IPSM. This time, Barry Town Council acted as hosts, with IPSM President Derek Wolfe, the Town Council's (Chief) Executive Officer, providing a taxi service for some Council members, ferrying them from Barry Station and back again after the meeting. The 15th July meeting took place in the Town Council's modern Council Chamber. The IPSM's governing body, its Council, currently comprises 10 IPSM members, 9 of whom were elected to serve the Institute and its members for 2008 at the last AGM held on 9th November 2007 in London. The Council's current representatives are **Derek Wolfe** (President & Hon. Secretary) (Devon – Local Government); **Adrian Waite** (Vice-President) (Cumbria – Public & Third Sector Consultant); **Maurice Condie** (Hon. Treasurer) (Tyne & Wear – Housing Association); **Stephen Guile** (Immediate Past President) (Somerset – National Health Service); **Julie Price** (Suffolk – Local Government); **Martin Harvey** (Webmaster) (Powys - Retired); **Peter Nourse** (Somerset – Public Sector Interim Manager); **Pravin Shah** (London - Local Government); **Robin Raily** (South Yorkshire – Local Government) and **Rodger Lawrence** (Birmingham – Public Sector Interim Manager).



At its 9th May meeting in Newcastle, Council examined a report submitted by Robin Raily concerning the need for the IPSM to prepare and implement a proper Business Plan. He

stated that he had made provision within the draft for the specification of non-financial targets and suggested that the Institute's strap-line be amended to read "Serving managers in the public and third sectors". He felt that the Plan should be disseminated on three distinct levels, the public version of the Plan amounting to the IPSM's strategic objectives, as set out in the document, IPSM members being given access to this plus a summary of the Business Plan, whereas the comprehensive document, once finalised, would remain within the Council.

It was agreed that those questions set out in the draft should be e-mailed to those Council members who had been unable to attend, so that Robin could include specific responses received within his revised draft, for consideration at our next meeting.

The IPSM's Council also considered a detailed report on communications and marketing prepared by the Vice-President. Adrian summarised the contents of his draft strategy, highlighting his conclusions, notably that the Communication & Marketing Strategy should focus on specific actions, such as maintaining up-to-date information concerning IPSM products, including accreditation, events, training opportunities, TOPICS and the Discussion Forum on the Institute's website, as well as making use of e-mails and similar on-line modes of communication to draw the website's contents to the attention of members and potential members, plus raising awareness of the IPSM and its activities via the preparation and circulation of carefully worded press releases.

It was agreed that the contents of the draft strategy be approved, subject to the preparation of an Action Plan, which Adrian offered to prepare, for incorporation into the overall Business Plan being worked on by Robin.

It was reported that David Elverson, the Commercial Director of Spirals Ltd, the Institute's strategic learning and development partners, had provided a short description of the CMI Level 5 Executive Diploma in Management that Spirals could run through their partner company, Change Consultancy. Council was informed that there were two options for delivering this. The first was via a bespoke course for IPSM members, run on agreed dates anywhere in the UK, at a cost of around £2450. The second, via Change Consultancy, would be via an open rolling programme that single delegates could book onto and start whenever it was convenient to them. This was probably the most accessible route to get learners learning via the IPSM; however it ran from a Norfolk training centre.

It was felt that it would be helpful if Spirals could survey our members, to obtain information on training needs. Council commented that the second option appeared to provide the best route for those IPSM members who wished to obtain additional qualification training. It was also suggested that perhaps Spirals might prepare an integrated training programme focussing on members training aspirations, which currently were largely unknown. The proposals set out in the report were accepted and approved, but Spirals Ltd. would be asked to prepare a draft questionnaire covering members existing qualifications, plus their perceived needs, for further consideration by Council.

At its May meeting, the IPSM's Council supported various minor amendments to its Articles and Regulations, asset out in a report prepared by the President, most of which were relatively minor. These largely amounted to a "tidying-up" exercise, or were amendments intended to bring the Council's formal documentation into line with existing practice.

Council members had a lengthy discussion of a detailed report submitted by The IPSM's Webmaster, Martin Harvey, concerning the future of the Institute's website, which had

first been written some years ago, though it has been given a facelift since. In his report, Martin stated that he carried out all editing, as this required some knowledge of the technology. In his view, the solution was to rewrite the site to a Content Management System (CMS) based system. The advantages of such a system were that (1) it allowed for distributed editing, i.e. named individuals could have responsibility for creating and editing certain pages; (2) editing was done via a password and using a built-in WYSIWYG editor; (3) editing could be carried out on any screen with internet access, in 'real time' and without the requirement of any specialist knowledge; (4) the CMS software used would be 'Open Source' i.e. released free under licence – it was considered to be very user-friendly.

It was decided to defer this item for fuller consideration at the Council's next meeting, with Martin present, and in the meantime, Adrian and Maurice offered to prepare additional / alternative proposals relating to website provision for the IPSM.

The President reminded other Council members that he had placed an item on the Institute's Internal Discussion Board suggesting that the IPSM gives consideration to holding an unique celebratory Dinner, giving all IPSM members and their partners the opportunity to meet and to get to know one-another, but more importantly with the objective of celebrating (albeit somewhat belatedly) the Institute's 25th anniversary. He felt that this would be a nice way of showing optimism for the Institute's future, celebrating the fact that the Institute has now matured, reaching and passing 25 years of successful service to managers in the public, voluntary and not-for-profit sectors.

With regard to the venue, he considered that, as a national (even an international) body, the Institute should look to hold its celebratory event somewhere special, a place that can also lay claim to an international theme. With this in mind, he had negotiated a special rate with the Suites Hotel, Knowsley, located a few miles outside Liverpool. The hotel was prepared to lay on a special Dinner in the sum of £25 per head for the IPSM and its members on the evening of Friday 10th October 2008, with a specially discounted rate for those wishing to stay over on Friday night, at a rate of £80 per room per night (for couples) including a full English breakfast the following morning. The rate for single occupants would be £70 per room/ night.

It was pointed out that in 2008, Liverpool had been designated European City of Culture. There would be much to see, to do and to marvel at, either during the day on Friday or, for those wishing to stay overnight at the Suites Hotel, during the day on Saturday. To take advantage of the heavily discounted rates, the IPSM would have needed to ensure that at least 100 members (including partners) put their names forward. As at 31st March, only 20 members had expressed an interest in this event. This being the case, Derek had gone back to Suites Hotel, with a view to identifying a smaller banqueting / conference room that we might be able to hire. As luck would have it, a smaller room was available for either Friday 10th or Saturday 11th October, seating between 30 and 40 guests. Due to having to spread the overhead costs amongst a smaller number of people, the cost of the 4 course meal would now be £28 instead of £25 per head, but the generous discounts in relation to overnight accommodation remained. This event would be self-financing, no costs being borne by the IPSM.

It was agreed that the special commemorative dinner in Liverpool would proceed on Friday 10th October, subject to there being no financial implications for the IPSM, and subject to a minimum of 25 members (including their guests) booking places at this event and paying for their reservations.

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